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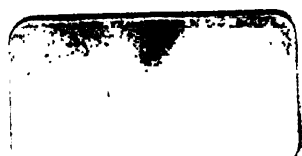
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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

VOLUME LI

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER

1903

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

'Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous fields of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality.'—EDGER ALLEN POE.

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**The Story of a Musician, by Frances Irvin.
Illustrations by Louise B. Mansfield***



"It is long since I have indulged in such frivolity," objected Marot; "my age and my professional standing demand a certain dignity of conduct—"

"Nonsense!" said Lery, his old pupil, slipping an arm through his. "An artist like yourself may do as he pleases, and let lesser musicians howl as they will. This is not a waste of time—you are diverted, you are giving me pleasure, and then there are voices worth hearing within this 'cage of screech owls,' as you call it; and dancing—Ciel!"

*Written for Short Stories.

With a protesting laugh and a shrug Marot, composer, musician, master of vocal training, and erstwhile opera-singer, allowed himself to be gently guided through the doorway of the Café Chantant, in which Léry found places at a small table well in the rear.

"You are as unmanageable as ever, and as full of whims," Marot remarked, and leaned back to view the dance just ending, with an indulgent smile.

He talked without cessation through the next chanson populaire, with one hand on the shoulder of Léry, who listened and gazed at him affectionately. They forgot time and place in their reminiscences, in their interested eager exchange of opinions which had diverged widely since their last meeting; until a sudden hush in the room, and a few *piano* notes from a voice of melting sweetness startled them to silence. It was a simple and touching ballad sung by a woman whom Léry could not have pronounced either plain or beautiful, so simple was her dress, so modest her lowered eyes, so quiet yet full of tremulous strength the easy legato of her style.

"A voice!" exclaimed Marot, leaning forward with his hand on the other man's knee. "A rare voice! it has great qualities!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm as the ballad ended. "I must speak to the director—I must find her out—"

But he stopped again, as the singer trilled forth into a gay, popular song. The quaint simple maiden vanished; coming to the front of the stage, she let her hearers know the full charm of her long-lashed and laughing gray eyes. She took dancing steps and pirouetted with her head thrown back—all gay witchery and diablerie, while Marot and Léry looked at each other with wondering smiles.

"Deceived again! I thought her an angel!" said Léry.

Marot waited for her encore, then as she laughed and ran out for the second time, the gray-haired apostle of music rose. "Wait for me here, my dear Léry. I must see the singer—I must know that voice!"

That voice—to him an individuality, a wondrous creation of unlimited possibilities. Already his trained ear had marked its depths, its weaknesses, its rare characteristics, and the jealous mastership that was in him claimed a new-found treasure. The perfecting and developing of it lay in his power and presented itself as a duty.

In the bare room adjoining the stage, to which his card won him admission, Marot found her, the object of the attentions of a tall, greasy-haired boulevardier, to whom she showed scant favor.

"My child," he said, touching her arm gently, "perhaps you have heard of me—I am Marot, known for many years in opera, and I now train singers for the stage. I wish to talk to you—"

The obnoxious flatterer fell back, and the two were soon in earnest conversation.

"To leave this engagement? but the money is what keeps me alive—I have no other way of earning anything, and I am not yet reduced—" she glanced contemptuously around on the groups of men and women in the room.

"Have you been singing here long?"

"My father was violinist here, and the director heard my voice one day when he came by chance to our lodging. He begged me to come, but Jean always refused. Now—he is dead—and I had no choice. I have been here a few months; the director is kind, and has taught me many things. But, last week, he tried to force me to sing a favorite air of poor Jean's!—I could have killed him! He will not ask again."

"But you are being wasted—thrown away here. Besides, you are too young—it is not a fit place for you."

"It is not so bad as they picture it," she said, flushing a little angrily. "I have some good friends, and as for the rest, if one is not a fool—"

"I have found her just in time," thought Marot. "Another half year and she would have clung to this life."

Two Frenchmen, tall and well-dressed, came in and stood as if waiting to speak to the singer, greeting her with excessive gallantry as she came toward them. She chatted gayly for a while, and returned to Marot at last with a little air of triumph, as if she had given him proof of her last assertion.

"My song comes in a few minutes and then I am leaving," she began. "You are very kind, monsieur, but—"

"It will take me only a few minutes to say what I wish. I propose that you give up this engagement, and put yourself under my instruction which I give gladly in the interest of Art. I have absolute faith in your voice, it has a great scope, and very unusual qualities. You have not misused it much as yet; if you stay here you are in a fair way to do

so, and in two years it will be rough and incapable of development. I have noted your faults of method. On the other hand, three years—I name a safe figure—of proper instruction will transform you into a dramatic singer welcome on any stage."

She stood before him in her demure plain gray gown that suggested the simplicity of her first ballad, a white kerchief crossed over her breast and leaving her throat bare; her thick black hair parted and drawn over her ears into a low knot at the back; her figure slight and yet rounded, and full of the quick grace of the Frenchwoman.

"I can't believe you," she said. "I have not much faith in generosity. You offer a great deal, and of course I might disappoint you."

"The future offers you a great deal. Nature has already given you much, and you do not value it. Such a voice as yours will be one day is rare on the operatic stage." She continued to look at him incredulously.

"My child, I am old enough to be your father. I know this world with its good and evil—I know the world of Paris. Are you, with your glorious gift, going to throw yourself before these good-for-naughts, who are as eager as vultures for every new victim? Let me show you another and larger world, a world worth conquering—let me show you how to conquer it with your voice. Then choose, when the best of everything lies before you."

She looked at his kind, earnest face, the eyes so full of true interest and friendliness, the gray hair bristling erect on his head in the fashion her father too had affected. For some reason tears sprang to her eyes.

"I would have no means of support—" she faltered.

"That could be all arranged. I am not a poor man, nor helpless yet, if I *am* getting old." He took both her hands and held them with a sort of benign tenderness. "You have it in you—the courage and the artistic feeling," he whispered, not to be overheard by the two waiting *élégants*. "I will see the director, and to-morrow will come to see you where you are living. By then you will have had time to think it all over. You can return with me to my studio so that I can try your voice, and then—we will come to a conclusion."

They parted as the "*demoiselle grise*" was called for her

final song, and by the time Marot returned to his place she had vanished again.

"What success?" said Léry, who was applauding enthusiastically.

"She is reluctant to think of serious study. Perhaps at some future day she will come to me. She is—a little disappointing when one talks to her—" he halted. He could not tell what instinct made him hide the truth from Léry. Marot was diplomatic, but not too good at prevarication.

"You are deceiving me," laughed the other. "You don't want me to see the girl. I vow she is charming, and I am going to have a word with her." Marot shrugged his shoulders and let him go, knowing that by this time "*La Grise*" was well on her way up the bright boulevard. Léry came back annoyed and declaring to the imperturbable Marot that he would certainly find her on the following evening.

"You have deteriorated," said Marot, "since you became a sculptor. Had you remained under my influence you would have been a hard worker, a prudent liver—more serious, and with more conscience—"

"And with a horrible voice," added Léry. "My dear old master, I love and revere you more than any man living; I will not tease you any more, for I remember that you were always headstrong where your protégés were concerned."

Marot did not reply. They went out, on the whole, a little cold, and not quite sure of each other.

Léry could not carry out his plan for the next evening, and when he returned to the café ten days later "*la demoiselle grise*" had almost been forgotten in the charms of a stout contralto who wore poppies and gave embellished imitations of "*Carmen*."

"You are a fool, as usual," said Marot's wife, when he confided his project. "You will be imposed upon: the girl, of course, is tricky and not at all as grateful as she appears. She will use you in some way."

"One cannot be 'imposed upon' by a voice. It is there—it declares itself—it cries to me to liberate it. As to the girl's character, I can find nothing evil in it. The director—who demands less for her release than I expected, the people she had been lodging with—spoke well of her. Ciel! what a miserable lodging! This may be the saving of her—at any

rate I willingly take the risk. She cannot make off with any of my theories for at least two years, and if she gets tired and leaves me, Art and the Public will be the chief losers."

"You are a good man, but you are crazed by your profession. I wash my hands of your doings. Come, where is that music you wanted copied?" So the two lived, arguing, and adoring each other.

A knot of foreigners, all pupils of Marot, were wintering in Tours, and he found it to his advantage to spend two days there out of every week. A happy idea had come to him. An old servant of his was settled there, and he made arrangements with her for a lodging for "La Grise." He was triumphant at getting the girl out of Paris. He broached the topic gingerly, fearing after all that she might rebel, and pine of loneliness in a small town, devoid of the sparkle and life she knew. But when he spoke of old Marthe and the comfortable lodgings he had provided for her, of kind people he knew in T——, of the inducements to study, and of his regular visits, the girl began to weep.

"My dear—my dear—friend—" she faltered, "how can I thank you? I am really so tired of all this here, and it is often hideous to be alone. Poor Jean's death—if something had not happened soon, I think I should have jumped into the Seine." Her tragic air was not affected, and he had never before seen her so moved.

In the train, during their journey of a few hours, she put her hand timidly over his arm, and said in a low tone:

"I shall work! Oh, how I shall work!"

"My judgment is not always so faulty," thought Marot, "but I will be cautious, and I will not expect too much."

Marot, with his kind, understanding eyes that gazed long at her, and grew tearful at her clinging to him, had gone at last, leaving her in the quaint, four-roomed lodging with the good old peasant woman. Overcome suddenly with her old grief and loneliness, as well as by the wonderful kindness that had been showered upon her, Gabrielle threw herself on the bed and cried herself to sleep. When she woke it was late afternoon. She pushed open the shutter and disclosed to view a tiny dark street, the houses crowding against the protecting mass of the great cathedral. Quite a distance to the left one flying buttress seemed to have alighted between two

ancient houses that leaned and toppled on it lovingly. One boasted a tiny corner tower with a pointed cap of gray slates. The windows of this house had gently subsided from the severity of their original angles, and were moreover placed at irregular heights and spaces, as if the builder had been pre-occupied and knocked one here and there as the thought occurred to him. The entrance door boasted an archway whose fretted stonework had grown soft and warm and indistinct of pattern, like used and ancient lace. Over all this ravishment of age the cathedral threw its vast impenetrable shadow.

A little farther on where a wrought-iron lamp thrust itself out from the corner house, a flight of roughly paved steps descended by turns and angles to the lower town, whose roofs were just visible through a narrow opening among the houses. The street, which encircled the cathedral, was only visited at rare intervals by strangers, who forgot all else in the glories of the interior. It opened out on a quiet square behind the apse, warm and sun-flooded, delighting the eager Gabrielle's eyes. The corner house was the most noticeable on the square. It had a sculptured doorway and two broad windows above, with plain stone arches, divided by stone bars in the center. These windows were nearly always open, and thin scarlet curtains blew in and out. Such was the angle of the square that this house commanded a view down the Rue des Clôîtres, and formed a gay focus for the eyes of its inhabitants, dwelling in the cathedral's shade.

The gargoyles on the cathedral roof were not far above the level of Gabrielle's window, and kept there an eternal watch, with the moss grown green in their grooves where the rain had left small pools. The great sloping roof soared away above them—the double rows of buttresses thrust outward like the serried ranks of oars in an old-time galley. One gargoyle had the head of a frog, another that of a strange griffon, which clung with all four feet to the stone as he surveyed the street below. The third, nearest the window, pulled his right ear forward with one paw, and with the other clutched his wide-open mouth, while his eyes bulged with expectation.

"What is he listening for?" thought Gabrielle. "Why, waiting to hear me sing, of course!—and he has been waiting who knows how many years?"

She was delighted with the humor of the idea, and felt a sense of companionship with these strange creatures. For very joy she trilled forth a few notes, sending them up to break and shiver and soar to silence over the vast roof. "You shall soon know what I can do, *gargouille!*" she said gayly.

Once more she leaned out and looked, first to the left with its glimpse of the square and the gay-curtained window, its vista of roofs where the paved steps descended; then to the right where the light was less and the houses followed a tortuous line around the buttresses, and where along the rough cobble stones came good old Marthe with her basket of vegetables and frugal provisions for the evening meal.

The sunlight as it touched the gargoyles fell for a short time each day in at Gabrielle's room. She welcomed it and reckoned the noon hour by it. The days were crowded so full that she had little time to mope or dream. She was thrilling still at the sudden change in her fortunes, absorbed in Marot's instructions and tasks. She must read—she must memorize verses for him—become familiar with the wonderful stories of the operas she would study later. She must follow all his rules strictly—sing for so long, no longer, each day. Sometimes she walked out with Marthe; every day, often more than once, she went into the cathedral and said her prayers in a quiet corner. At these hours poor Jean was uppermost in her thoughts.

Then came the weekly visits of Marot, and her walk to his studio, where she spent the morning and often the entire day, listening to his pupils from a hidden corner, and profiting by the criticism that Marot flung at them mercilessly. She begged him not to present her to any of these students—many were foreigners, all were well-dressed, gay, intimate with one another. From the window-seat she watched them as though they were before her on a stage, and thought how their bravado and airs would vanish before a critical Paris audience—above all such audiences as those to which she had sung!—who demanded the best thing of its kind, though the "kind" differed in standard from the fashionable theaters.

"I can hide you for a time," said Marot, "but not for long, especially if anyone chances to hear your voice. No one must hear it for a long time yet—that is my express wish."

The evenings with Marot she liked best of all, and exulted

in the thought that none of his other pupils saw him as she did—communicative, reminiscent and almost childish in his readiness for any small diversion. They went to the theater, or listened to the music in the square, or sat in Marot's studio, she on a low bench listening to his tales of opera days and triumphs. Marot was astonished to witness the quickening of her intelligence, and the hold his ideas seemed to have over her. He had never moulded so pliable a nature—he attributed her impressionability to her recent grief, and to the intense and reverent gratitude she felt to him.

"Are you lonely?—do you miss Paris?" he said one night.

She colored faintly. "Sometimes."

"It is natural. You shall return there with me for a few days whenever you like. Madame Marot will receive you gladly, or, if you wish, you can return to your old lodging." He awaited her answer curiously.

"Oh, no—oh, no! I am glad, now, that you brought me away from Paris. Here all is fresh and new, there is nothing dreadful to remember; but there I think of how poor Jean died—gasping for breath. And then, I am not 'La Grise' any more. I am really different, *cher maître!*"

What he had aroused was ambition, and the love for her work. His wife ceased to deplore his infatuation, as he gave her occasional accounts of the girl's progress. Old Marthe had grown fondly attached to her.

But there came a week when Marot was detained by illness in Paris. The days seemed endless, and Gabrielle realized for the first time how all her week had merged to his visits, and how truly lonely was her life otherwise. She stood near her window and sang the studies that suddenly seemed so difficult, and the gargoyle leaned mockingly above to listen, dragging his ear forward with one grotesque paw. The afternoon was dark, and threatening rain. She felt overwhelmed with a sudden horrible sadness. Her voice broke, and she hid her face in her arms. It was Marot, her kind old master, alone, who gave her courage. How many years of work and loneliness like this would realize his aim for her? And meanwhile, who cared whether she laughed or wept? Even Marot himself was more disturbed at the roughness of her voice than for its cause when she had spent hours of the night in tears over sad memories. Would she go back to Paris, to the gayety and excitement of the old life? In her heart

she knew that "la demoiselle grise" had almost forgotten how to trill and pirouette as of old before an enthusiastic audience—even though the "new voice" that Marot was slowly liberating should send the poor director into paroxysms of envy.

Work—patience—new words, and hard to learn; and they could not fill one's life! She leaned out of the window and looked mechanically toward the square for the fluttering crimson curtains that always made such a gay, delicious spot of color on dull days. But the windows with their arches and dividing stone bars were shut—and the gargoyle grinned derisively.

"Bête! Horreur!" cried Gabrielle to him—and shut her window with a crash.

She flung on a wrap and went out to say her prayers at the cathedral, as a relief to loneliness rather than in any spirit of devotion.

The place was almost deserted. The verger was cleaning the great pillars with a bunch of leaves set on a long pole; the dust of ages came drifting down. He paused in his work and waited for Gabrielle's daily greeting.

"How dark and dismal it is!" said the girl. "Everything is so cold and gloomy that I am almost afraid to go over to that chapel to say my prayers."

"There are flowers there, and the lamps are lit," said the verger. He was hurt. The old cathedral in its dingiest and darkest moods was his love and his life.

They stood looking toward one of the great rose windows in the transept. "You are all sound asleep," he went on, "when the light is finest. It is here—" bringing his feet together on a well-worn stone, "that you should stand early in the morning if you want to see the true beauty of those windows."

A strange voice answered.

"May I come to-morrow morning, then, my good Clément? You know I am greedy enough to gloat over the place in its every possible aspect."

Gabrielle had not noticed a man standing near in the shadowy aisle, and she went slowly away as he approached.

"I shall not open the doors so early to-morrow; it is better to come in the afternoon, as usual," grumbled the old man, not yet mollified.

There were spots of flame on the stone arches, and a broad blue bar slanted down into the chapel of St. Francis. The afternoon sun blazed on the delicate tracery of the great rose window, and on the twelve narrow arched openings below where glowed the gorgeous red of apostles' robes, popes with croziers and aureoled saints, and kings, in scarlet and ermine.

The architect was always here at the same hour, seated in the aisle that encircled the choir, while he sketched the effect of the vaulting at various points, the decoration of the arch over the sacristy door, or the design of a capital. Behind the choir were the stained-glass windows of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in deepest reds and blues, with their small medallion panes picturing the lives of the saints. Among them a more modern window asserted itself—vainly trying to rival their coloring—bearing an image of the Archangel Michael, warring and triumphant: the deep blue of his mantle was thrown, as the sun began to decline, straight across the face of the artist. It grew to be a signal for him to stop work, for by the time the sun had gone there would be no light left for sketching; but he was impatient of the garish half hour, and bore the archangel a grudge.

She was there, as he had seen her many an afternoon, in a seat in front of a huge pillar, from where she could see the full width of the transept and its two rosaces, and more than half the choir with its wine-red glow and the warm brilliance of the triforium. As the blue glare again dazzled him, the architect looked savagely at the archangel and began to put away his sketching materials. Suddenly a dark shadow obscured the blue. The girl was standing not far off, looking at him curiously.

"If she would stand there just an instant," he thought, "I could finish putting in that figure." He seized his crayon and made rapid strokes.

"Pardon me—I am in your light," she said, apologetically.

"Pray, don't move!" he cried; "you are in the archangel's light—it is of the greatest service to me." She stood watching him, with a flicker of the old smile of "*la demoiselle grise*."

"Thank you so much!" he said in an instant. "You are very good. Now I can get my drawing off to the *École* to-night."

"That sculpture over the door is very beautiful."

"You come here every day—" he said, tentatively.

"You have noticed?—yet I have not seen you."

"You were in the chapel, or else sitting entranced with the color in this glorious old place."

"I should like very much to see your drawings."

"I should find great pleasure in hearing you sing."

"You know?—how is that?"

"I have ears—not eyes alone—and I live near the cathedral."

"I am not allowed to sing for anyone yet. I must close my window. I did not think anyone heard but the gargoyles!"

"Please do not shut us all out! It is very faint and sweet; I could not tell for a long time where it came from. You should sing on Christmas day in the cathedral."

Gabrielle was trembling. It was all so unexpected, and she could not half see this man now the sun had dropped down. "Please do not speak to anyone of my voice—yet. It would displease my master."

"Then I beg that you will soon give me the pleasure of hearing it. I am haunted by its beauty already. *Made-moiselle*, if you do not, we shall all pray to be turned into gargoyles!"

Gabrielle laughed. "Is there anyone but you?"

"A friend who arrives to-morrow. Will you do me the great honor some day to sing in my studio?"

"I will ask my master—there is time enough yet," she said. The thought of her kind Marot restrained her as no influence had ever done. She surveyed the tall, muscular stranger critically as she left him. His suggestion offered a break, a variety in her monotonous life, but she walked away with a deliberation new to her. "I will tell Marot, *mon cher maître*," she thought, singing softly as she went up the stairs to her room, and opened the shutters to let in the last rays of daylight. "I kiss my hand to you, *gargouilles*! You look kinder than last night, and there is yet some joy in living."

Mechanically she turned to her glimpse of the square. The architect stood in the window, between the crimson curtains, which he had pushed aside against the stone framework. He gave an exquisite military salute. Gabrielle sank back in a chair and laughed with sheer childish delight.

Old Marthe came panting up the stairs with a basket of fresh flowers. "A servant has just brought them—and you

will find some writing here." Gabrielle roused excitedly out of sleep.

"Where others are enjoined to silence, the language of the flowers may convey a fitting tribute to a beautiful voice."

Monsieur l'architect was abroad and astir early! His windows were open, and her eyes wandered to them as they had ever done, as if drawn by a magnet. That day a letter came from Marot, saying that he was ill and might not come to T—— for a fortnight. So that, two days later, when a servant brought a formal and courteous note begging mademoi-



selle to give the great pleasure of her singing to the Comte de Vilars and his friend, she hesitated no longer, but escorted by old Marthe, who gabbled and rebelled, but yielded as ever, crossed the square to the alluring doorway of mellow, fretted stonework.

Gabrielle stood by the window, fingering the elusive, delicious draperies of crimson silk. The Comte, who was grave, muscular, serious, absorbed in his art, directed a servant in arranging a little table of refreshments. He was a new type to the interested eyes of Gabrielle. She was quite at her

ease, standing in her old gray gown with a wide black hat that shaded her eyes. Suddenly he stopped before her with a smile and gesture that might have delighted a queen. "I am selfish enough to wish to hear the first song myself—my friend will soon arrive. Will mademoiselle begin?"

When she had stepped forward, he threw himself into a huge carved chair and waited with his eyes fixed upon her in a dreamy, indolent expression.

She sang with a vigor and gradation of tone that would have delighted Marot. As she lingered over the close, the door opened and another man entered.

He bowed to the singer with the manner of a Paris exquisite. "I was in time to hear the last few notes of divine sweetness,—Vilars, this is too bad! I would not for the world have missed any of this pleasure."

"Mademoiselle will be generous, and give you an equal chance to judge of her great talent. I have never heard a more beautiful voice," said the Comte.

Gabrielle looked from one to the other, knew them both appreciative and enraptured with her singing, and into the new beauty of her voice there crept the old *verve* and fascination that had held audiences in Paris.

The sculptor and the architect came toward her exclaiming in their enthusiasm. The former bent to kiss her hand, while the Comte placed a chair and offered her a glass of wine. M. Leroux's eyes, it seemed to her, did not leave her face.

"If I am not to sing any more?—" said Gabrielle, raising her hand to the glass.

"If mademoiselle will!— I did not dare to ask, thinking she might be fatigued."

"I could sing on and on when an audience listens as you do, messieurs!" She was laughing and elated, and her old audacity rushed over her beneath the admiring glances of Leroux.

"Here is a song that I have learned—without the aid of my master!" She was suddenly "La Grise" again, flinging bewitching glances at her listeners. The men applauded frantically, and she sank down, breathless and radiant, on a wide carved bench, while Leroux brought her cakes and wine.

"And yet, mademoiselle, that last is not worthy of you. You are destined for such great things," said the Comte.

"I know, I know! but there is life, there is joy, just in that reckless and foolish thing."

"Mademoiselle could make the poorest melody worthy if she gave it the charm of her voice. I am indeed fortunate to have left Paris, where there are now no singers." Gabrielle met the sculptor's eyes thoughtfully.

"Monsieur will be some time in T——?"

"The Comte kindly asks me to stay, and I shall have the use of his studio. I hope that you will come again, not once but many times."

The Comte on some pretext left the room, and the two continued talking alone.

"You have enchanted me, mademoiselle, not only with the charm of your voice, but with your eyes, your face—Ciel! if I could have it in marble! The fact is this—I have promised a head for the Exhibition, and I have begun to despair of ever finding a model. It would be the greatest favor—and what exquisite lines—the forehead, the eyes—*Pardon!* but I am given to raving. Would you consent to sitting, at least a few times?"

"I think—there is nothing to prevent," said Gabrielle. "My master, Marot, is ill and away, and I cannot sing and study all day."

"Marot! I know him well—the best of men! Do not let him know until it is finished, and we will give the marble, later, to him—that is, if I can bear to part with it. Marot! he is the kindest of men."

"He is, indeed; no one has ever been so kind to me."

"But you have shut yourself away—why do you bar everyone out—why do you spend your whole youth—"

"Nothing must interfere with my work, and my promise to Marot—I owe him everything," said the girl, rising proudly.

"Nothing shall interfere, mademoiselle, but surely to spend an hour in these charming surroundings, to talk with such a man as the Comte, an artist and litterateur—"

"You efface yourself nobly!" she laughed. "I will come, then, to have my profile modeled by a sculptor and to talk—to the Comte."

As it happened, the Comte was seldom in the studio, or passed in and out on some slight errand. The modeling took longer than was expected, and Marot remained so ill

that before his return the head was finished, and Leroux had departed carrying his precious work with him to Paris.

Gabrielle was hopelessly, overwhelmingly in love. The grave Comte had become her friend, but the sculptor with his daring, insistent eyes, his enthusiasm, his reckless love-making, filled all her thoughts. She worked mechanically, but faithfully, according to her promise to Marot, and gazed up at the grinning stone faces above her window that seemed to mock at the hopeless thralldom binding her.



"I am in love!" she said to the darkening night.

"Listen! she is in love!" grinned the monster, ere the darkness veiled him.

For the first time she became utterly discouraged with her progress—dreaded the thought of a "career"; looked backward and forward at the months of drudgery past and to come, as if a limitless desert surrounded her, standing desperate and solitary. At intervals, when she had attained some self-command, Leroux's letters came to dispel all her calmness of soul.

She would throw her arms out on the dusty pile of opera scores and remain thus for a long time, with her face hidden. She longed for Marot to return and break the horrible spell.

The Comte de Vilars appeared to understand. She talked to him a little as he sat sketching an altar piece in a side chapel. He too was soon returning to Paris, having taken the studio for a few months in order to make special studies in T—— for the course he was about completing. He was less grave when Leroux was away, and treated her as a child who needed to pour out her troubles.

One evening as he walked home with her in the dusk Gabrielle began hesitatingly, "You are so good to listen—and I begin to be ashamed. I shall not talk of this any more."

The architect pressed her hand. "I am fond of Leroux, but you do talk a little too much about him to suit my taste! I have something to say to you—to-morrow—"

She had a glimpse of his face as Marthe opened the door, and ran upstairs in a tumult of new thoughts.

"I am better, quite recovered," said Marot. "I leave to-morrow for T——. I came in to see how all went with you and to take a look at your work, which I have never seen."

"You are more than welcome," said his old pupil.

"You sculptors say that the form is within the stone, that it takes but the sure and patient hand to liberate it. In the same way I set free a voice, by slowly breaking away its coverings."

"You would have discovered a horror to the world in liberating mine," said Léry, who loved thus to ridicule his master.

"This, too, is a thing of horror which you have freed," said Marot, pausing in his walk before a figure whose faulty proportions struck the most untrained observer.

"That is—a mistake," said Léry, flinging a cloth over it somewhat angrily, "to which we are all sometimes prone."

"Show me your new reliefs," said Marot, desiring peace. "I hear they are very fine."

Léry walked to a corner and pulled the damp cloth from several pieces in process of modeling. As he explained them he did not notice that a covering had fallen also from the nearly completed marble of a woman's head, before which Marot stood riveted.

"Mais—c'est La Grise—c'est Gabrielle—how in the name of the saints have you done this?"

There was no loophole for excuse.

"You were not expected to see it—it is not quite finished," said Léry, hesitating and trying to laugh. Old Marot turned on him.

"Explain, sir," he demanded, "how you have tricked me. How have you seen the girl? You knew it was my express wish to keep her by herself—that I had staked a great deal on her operatic success. How did you find her out?"

"If you had not hidden her away so carefully, I should not have found her! I should never have found her in Paris. But when Gaston de Vilars wrote me of the exquisite voice he heard while he sat in his studio, and described the girl he saw in the cathedral, I felt sure it was La Grise—I went down and found her."

"So it took a pair of you to trick me?"

"Vilars knew nothing of you or of our acquaintance."

"Ah, I see! You feared he would not be party to any such manoeuvre?" Marot's voice quavered bitterly.

"I was crazy over the girl, and I wanted a model of her head—this is almost promised for the Exhibition. What calamity is there? My good Marot, nothing worse has befallen!"

"I don't trust you—no, my God! I do not! Who knows but that you have bewitched her, turned her head with flattery—made her miserable?"

"She knows the world as well as I do."

"Come, an end of this—are you going back to her?"

"That is my affair."

"Ah, you have wrought some mischief, I'll be bound. You shall hear from me later," Marot thundered, as he went down the rickety steps of the atelier.

He could not go for consolation to Madame Marot, whose dark prophecies had been fulfilled.

The next night found him with Gabrielle in his studio at T—; she speechless, spent with weeping, leaning against the heaped-up table where dust had lain unheeded since his weeks of absence. Everything spoke neglect, forgetfulness, ingratitude, to the overwrought feelings of Marot.

"Give up your singing? as well throw yourself into the sea—make way with your life!"

"I cannot sing—it chokes me. I cannot work, unless I have some other end than the future you promise me. I love Léry—you say I must give him up, give up all thought of loving any man for years—years."

"He is a bad man."

"I am bad, too—yes, that must be the trouble. I love him."

"He will not love you. He will tire of you as he has tired of everything, and ridiculed all that he has once loved."



"You do not know him—you do not know all that he has said to me."

"I know more than enough. I know that you have both tricked and duped me—that I have been made a fool of once more. Go now child; I am not calm enough to talk further."

"I never meant to dupe you. I know I broke my promise, but you were away—I was so discouraged and so lonely—

mon Dieu!—after all, what is a woman made of? In Paris, I had lovers, it was sometimes gay, and yet I worked—”

“Rubbish! falsehood! You knew what I demanded—after this I demand far more—and I have given what? Time, strength, energy, money—for this!”—snapping his finger. “Horrible! I kept you purposely from Léry, because I never trusted him.”

“He never told me—till the very last day—that he had seen me in the concert-hall in Paris. Oh, my good master, believe me, I am not such an ungrateful creature! Perhaps I can still sing and work—I will! I will!—give me one more trial!”

Marot sat unmoved. Gabrielle's face burned. She leaned for a moment against his chair, and he knew that she was weeping, but did not look up. Then she went out, down to the street, and straight to the house of the Comte de Vilars.

Though it was late, there was a glow of light in his studio windows. The Comte was shocked at the wretchedness in her face as she recounted all to him.

“I am unwittingly a party to all this, it appears,” he said with a shrug. “I, in fact, was sole means of bringing you here. I did not believe it of Léry. I have a letter from him here that I have not yet opened.”

“Whichever way I turn,” murmured Gabrielle, “I seem to make myself and others wretchedly unhappy.”

The Comte looked up from the letter pale and cold as she had never seen him. “It becomes my miserable duty,” he said, averting his eyes, “to convey to you the news that Léry is tired of the whole affair, sorry for his part in it, and anxious to withdraw. He has not been fair to Marot—mademoiselle, I would rather cut my hand off than tell you this.”

“It will take me a little time to believe it,” said La Grise, who grew suddenly as white as the marble statue behind her. “But I was too sure—I judged wrongly—why should I have expected—What can be done?” she murmured. “I can't think; everything has come in such a whirl.”

“I will see Marot in the morning—anything else that I can do for you, always remember that I am ready—”

The poor girl could not even find words to thank him as they separated.

It was a night of hideous dreams. She stood on a dark,

cold platform confronting a moving sea of stone faces, grotesque and horrible. Her voice, grown raucous and strange to hear, was quite out of her control; but at each fresh burst of her weird music the listeners bulged their eyes again, dragged their ears forward expectantly, and sent forth peals of sardonic laughter. Léry was there, too, turned griffon, mocking more horribly than them all. In the dark she called out for Marot—for M. le Comte—

It was morning, and there was his voice below, talking to old Marthe. "Tell mademoiselle to keep up courage—I have seen le maître, he has promised to receive me in an hour, and there will soon be good news."

M. le Directeur leaned back wearily, wondered if his carriage was waiting outside, fumed because his assistant was not present to-day of all others, to spare him the thankless task of sifting bad from worse in the great influx of singers that the season had brought to Paris.

"I might be saved this—there is nothing good here to-day," he muttered.

A few of the footlights were lit in the great opera house, and a handful of people in the front fauteuils were criticising a soprano's rendering of the Jewel Song.

"Heavy—high notes poor—bah! it is sacrilege to listen!"

By an angry movement he conveyed to the chef d'orchestre that the soprano was not pleasing to him. The music ceased, and the disappointed singer retired from view.

"Whom have we now?" asked the director of a person of official bearing who approached him consulting a written paper.

"Mlle. D.—She writes a charming letter; she has studied five years—her mother is waiting here across the aisle. She has spent all she had in her studies, and the assistant director encouraged her last spring and promised her this hearing."

"Then it is his place to be here."

The young applicant sang a difficult air of Mozart that must have cost her months of study. During its intricacies the director made a wry face. "What was Maillard thinking of? Tell her to go back and practise a year on that trill."

"She may be nervous."

"All the worse. No, I have no patience with her." The official returned with the message, and the singer descended to the elder woman in rusty black. They went slowly out arm in arm, the mother in tears.

"My time is up; I am due at the Place de l'Etoile. Finish the rehearsal, I am just leaving," he said to the chef d'orchestre, and made his way out. Two people were entering by the same side door.

"My good Marot! I am about departing! What brings you here?"

"What do I bring here?—an exquisite voice. This is Mlle. Gabrielle Trémars, a contralto."

"Better a soprano, we are in need of them. My contralto parts are filled."

"I wrote to you some time ago."

"Yes, but I at one time understood that the lady had forsaken her art."

"On the contrary," said Gabrielle, "I have more ambition, I am more confident of success than ever."

"That is well said, but—you will excuse me to-day, Marot. I am already late, and as I said, no contraltos are needed at this time."

"At least hear her for five minutes, my good director, for the sake of old times."

"No, no—you must excuse me, my nerves are unstrung. My singers are all engaged; the cast is full. I have told them to refuse all other applicants. I am on the verge of distraction with so much bad singing."

Marot looked as if about to despair. It was true he had come unheralded, venturing on the knowledge that the director himself was to hold a hearing to-day. He had seized the first opportunity in many months to have a free afternoon with Gabrielle in Paris. Fate had been against him—appointments made with the assistant director had been canceled for various trivial reasons. Now the season was late, but he had felt assured of success in the matter of the voice that three years of his instruction had rounded and perfected. As the director replaced his hat and pushed past them down the corridor muttering some apology, the good Marot's face fell.

Not so with Gabrielle. The loss of this chance would mean months, perhaps a whole year, of delay. Some singers

had waited for years on this man's pleasure. She drew her arm out of Marot's.

The footsteps of the director were far away down the deserted corridor. If he reached the door at the end—

Laughing, with the old audacity in her eyes, she sped after him. Marot heard one of her marvelous trills bubbling like the spring notes of a bird; then the whole great rich beauty of her voice poured forth, echoing in the marble corridor, thrilling her old master as no tones of hers had ever done.

Far away, around the curve of the passage, the director paused. The singer too stood still, but her music flooded on. She saw a swing door open, and Mabillard join the other man with a questioning glance.

"What is this—this great organ voice?" cried the director, as she paused for breath. With their hats in their hands the two men came toward her.

"Mademoiselle, you have conquered. Return with us, if you please, to the stage. I am overwhelmed—M. Marot, this great voice—we must have it. I have heard nothing like it."

A year later, in the foyer, two men were walking.

"I shall be quite content," said the Comte de Vilars, "to be the husband of a great opera singer, even though the world shall credit me with little individuality of my own. Gabrielle, perhaps, is not deeply in love with me—"

"If that is so—which I doubt—all the better for her Art. Yes, I am still merciless!" laughed Marot.





PEARL of China: A
Tale of the Pacific Coast, by
Harold Ballagh. Illustrations
by Edward Mayer*



“**W**HAT is that?”

According to the sign that flashed by the Yesler Avenue car-line windows it was a restaurant.

Little Seattle boys, with noses pressed flat against the street-car windows, pointed it out to their mothers, who if they had come from the region of upper Yesler Avenue—where very new villas stood in irreproachable rectitude in grounds adorned as yet by nothing but the black stumps of the “clearing”—hastily plucked the youngsters into correct positions and whispered: “Don’t talk about it!”

It was no wonder the sign amazed the beholders, for flanking the long English word were the most astonishing scratches and scrawls and the climax of sensational advertising—a marvelous, fierce, black dragon, breathing out frightful red spirals upon a flaming yellow background. Forgetting past repulses the boys would gasp: “What is it, mamma?”

“A Chinese restaurant—now hush!” with the usual clutch upon unruly legs. The “hush” is easily explained. The

*Written for Short Stories.

beautiful lake and the villas at one extreme of the long street-car line are as far removed from the ugliness and baseness of architecture and purpose at the other as is the white diamond from the polluting carbon. For this Chinese restaurant was only one of many similarly ignoble places in Jackson Street.

Within the house of the Dragon there was a main room bare of carpet, studded with ugly little tables also bare except for the crude furnishings of a tenth-rate eating-house. Ramshackly doors led into tiny, dark closets where unsavory bunks gave a hint of those strange sleeps induced by opium. The Dragon was practically deserted by day, but at night it echoed with the sing-song speech of a dozen different Chinese dialects, and where these dialects failed of their purpose the yellow men of the North talked to the yellow men of the South in broken English.

"And when shall we start?" asked Ho Wing Sui.

"To-morrow," said Yung Li.

Now Yung Li had been fifty moons in Jackson Street; many a little group of contraband Chinamen, smuggled down from British Columbia, had entered through his rear alley and disappeared ghost-like down his cellar steps to emerge one by one into those places long waiting for them; for as a god Yung Li held these newcomers in the hollow of his hand.

A group of ten men at this moment eyed ratlike the fat and unctuous face of Yung Li, for was he not the arbiter of their fate?

"What do we do when we get there?" persisted Ho Wing Sui.

Yung Li stared at his questioner in a manner that made some of

those immobile ones feel as if they were once again between decks in the foul-smelling Chinese steerage of the C. P., longing through the lift and dip of the odious waves for land or death.

"Work!" finally grunted Yung Li.



"Mines?" queried the irrepressible Ho Wing Sui.

Yung Li gave him a basilisk stare, but Ho Wing Sui unabashed eyed the great man in a manner compelling, positively commanding. One hand, narrow and delicate, with a long nail ornamenting the little finger, unconsciously grasped spasmodically the back of the rude chair next him. Yung Li angrily opened his mouth, but his fish-like eyes falling upon that clenched hand he suddenly closed it. To match that hand there should be education, station, clothes, money! With electrical rapidity he took in the whole man, soiled, coarse clothing, matted cue, pale, cadaverous face.

"What would you pay to change from work in coal mines?" smiled Yung Li in a manner intended to be ingratiating. So grotesque was this affectation of amiability, belied by the green and cruel eyes, that an involuntary shiver of repugnance chilled the blood of Ho Wing Sui. The beady eyes of the other nine traveled from their unexpected champion to the simpering, calculating features of the highbinder. Work? They had signed for work, and it mattered little what sort of work it might be; they knew they were mortgaged body and soul for years to come, but were not their parents in China cared for in the meantime? And themselves, if they died, would go back at least in the body to the consecrated ground of the faithful, for was not this in the bond? What then, did this man, for three whole weeks a man of silence, mean by his questions?

"Pay?" repeated Ho Wing Sui, with the first choke in his voice, "Nothing!"

"In coal mines," leered Yung Li, "a man arises before day, enters the bowels of earth, into the heat of hell, tears his hands with the heavy iron tools of this land, breathes the poisonous fire damp, handles fearful explosives, contracts the fast lung sickness, under taskmasters he does the work of beasts of burden, he is cursed and kicked by these foreign devils and when he wearily crawls up 1,000 feet to the surface, it is already night. Thus, he *never* sees the light of the sun—even for many years, if he live so long!"

Ho Wing Sui's grasp of the chair tightened, a look of agony escaped his control, for Yung Li had judged rightly that his questioner was unfortunately gifted with imagination, with sensibilities.

"And if one attempts escape," continued the highbinder, "he is killed with cruel tortures!"

Before Ho Wing Sui there sprang a vision of lines of kneeling prisoners, hands tied behind them, the executioner with sword in hand, the blood-pit yawning. He would not think on the tortures these prisoners might have undergone, and he doubted not the words of Yung Li, for he had seen men in even worse plight than a life in the mines.

"But I cannot—pay," he murmured from lips his pride kept from trembling—for Ho Wing Sui was but a youth. "I have nothing but these rags."

"Not even a charm to save yourself from—the mines, where one lives in filth, in eternal darkness, in silence, no speech, no book—?" Yung Li involuntarily grinned.

"Nothing—but—this—" stammered Ho Wing Sui, drawing from his breast a little embroidered bag, attached to a silk cord that passed over one shoulder and under his other arm. Yung Li snatched it from his hand and hastily opening the bag he turned out upon the bare table a pearl that appeared to stare back at his astonished eyes in matchless innocence.

"It is priceless," flashed joyously through his evil heart.

"It is worth little," he growled out loud.

"The jewel is of great value—to me," said Ho Wing Sui, through parched lips. His nine companions crowded around with looks of envy.

"You have stolen it!" ejaculated Yung Li.

"Rather all else I had was stolen from me," said Ho Wing Sui, and Yung Li believed, but would not acknowledge that he did.

"Nay, it is stolen," but seeing the drawing together of



Ho Wing Sui's brows as he reached out for the pearl, he added, "nevertheless I will accept it as a gift—a free gift—and in return you and your comrades need never go to the mines! To work light and pleasant will I take you."

Then the nine sat down and smoked as speechless and immobile as they had been throughout. But upon Ho Wing Sui's brow stood the beads of exhaustion, for his recent experiences had sapped the strength and the manhood from him.

"To-morrow," said Yung Li, craftily, "you will all go up country to pick hops, there is no work easier."

Tricky highbinder! There are no coal mines on Puget Sound in which Chinese are employed, and the men had been destined for the hop fields from the first.

Yung Li packed his voluntary slaves aboard a box car of the Seattle, Lakeshore and Eastern, for these cars were used to convey the crowds that swelled the ordinary traffic toward the hop fields, forty miles beyond.

Doubting the intentions of Yung Li, but feeling poignantly his helplessness in a strange country, without a knowledge of the language, Ho Wing Sui took what comfort he could in viewing the landscape when the station of Stillaguamish was reached. He looked at the little mining town huddled between the great mountains—covered with splendid sentinel firs and blazing with the first bright leaves of autumn—behind which the sun rose too late and set all too early. As he saw men passing with the slime of the pit upon them he felt soul-sick, for his eyes told him here indeed was a coal mine.

"You have tricked me! My pearl!" he said, passionately, holding out his hand.

Yung Li in pure bravado took out the little embroidered bag and held it toward the pale, agitated young man only to snatch it back with a diabolical laugh.

"My only hope of ransom I have parted with to this thief!" hammered itself subconsciously into Ho Wing Sui's brain.

"It was a gift," said Yung Li, with intense enjoyment of the evident agony of the other, "and I keep it forever. Go you all, down that road."

Ho Wing Sui followed automatically, not noticing the strange crowd he found himself with, for there were white men, women and children of every social condition, and Indians, the clam-digging Siwash and those from British Columbia and Alaska as well. Among these was one clad not

like the average squaw, but in the neat apparel that proclaimed her to have passed creditably through a Government Indian school. Her lithe young figure matched her pleasing face and her intelligent, lustrous eyes. She was the daughter of an Indian chief, and her tribe, having disposed instantly of their beautiful woven baskets in Seattle, had pressed on to their yearly camp at the Stillaquamish hop ranch. She had taken in the whole little scene in which the pale, proud-looking Chinaman had been rebuffed. Skilled in sign reading, she revolved a dozen theories of the surprising tableau she had witnessed. Did he not look like a chief's son? Why then had he clothing so inferior? Was the ugly, well-dressed man his master? And did he keep the other man's money? What strange speech and clothing had these men? The talk was not English which she knew well, nor French which she knew a little, nor yet Russian which also she had heard.



"Bill, see dem Chinks ahead? What gall old Wolf has to bring Chinks to a camp wid white men!" the Indian girl overheard; and so these strange men were called *Chinks*.

"Wolf lost part of his crop last year because there wasn't enough pickers, and I hearn he done bargained to git every white man, Injun, black man that the Snoqualmie hop men left in Seattle and up the coast," replied Bill.

"But *Chinks*! Now, Tom, I don't mind niggers, nor dagoes—work wid 'em in de mines—but *Chinks*!"

"Shet up, Bill, somebody'll hear you—it won't be so hard to fix 'em."

As the two young miners rudely passed by the slow-moving Indians the girl looked at them attentively. Ho Wing Sui noticed them not at all. Choking with the dust of the road, stirred up by the hundreds of eager feet ahead of him, for the crowd that had tumbled out of the mixed passenger and freight train struggled onward to get a choice of camping positions, he was amazed at the laughter that floated back to him.

"If these men and women and children were going as slaves to mines, would they laugh?" he asked himself. The further he left behind the rattle of machinery, the shunting of filthy coal cars, the hiss of donkey engines, the lighter beat his heart. Also the enclosing mountains no longer crushed the road under stern and threatening feet, the way led out into a valley glittering with masses of green through which wandered a wide stream dimpling under the kiss of the September sun—such a valley! Was it not a vineyard fringed with orchards?

"Those be the hop fields," said Yung Li, "and this is the owner thereof."

The Chinaman looked up at a man tall and fair, for he had come from the Norseland, seated on a great white horse.

"You will find your yob a good yob," said the owner of the ranch, grinning amiably. Only Yung Li understood. "How many men could you get?"

"Have got ten," said Yung Li.

"The money for the yob is to go to you?"

"Yes, cause why I pay for chow," explained Yung Li. "Where sleep?" he added.

"In that tent," said the big man pointing with his riding whip, and turning his horse around he galloped up the broad avenue toward his dwelling, a large frame house with verandas, from which he issued orders for the accommodation of the newcomers in the various parts of his estate. The bunk houses were already full, covered wagons sheltered many of the pickers, a gypsy-like camp quickly arose on the fringes of the fields. The Indians, stationed nearest the Chinese, were soon in living order, and then this small army of laborers went to work—or was it play?—among the vines.

delicious, clean and healthy smell of the hops scented

the atmosphere; great poles, vine-covered, stood in interminable rows down the shining valley; huge empty boxes cried out for their fragrant burden, and twinkling fingers, keeping time to chattering tongues and merry laughter, filled them with the delicate, green, paper-like fruit of the vine. There were men who did nothing but cut the vines near the roots, leaving only the stubble, and then took to the



pickers the festooned hop poles. There were others who bore away the brimming, huge but light boxes to the hop barns, leaving coupons for the same in the hands of the pickers. There were races run between merry maidens and audacious youths; there were syndicate boxes, and there were children's boxes, largely filled by the pluckings of grandparents. The green of the aisles was interspersed by dashes of vivid color,

the head coverings of Indians, the flaunting of short-skirted girls; in sections of the field fingers worked to the rhythm of a lively chorus.

"The man says, put no leaves in the boxes," explained Yung Li to his men, watching but lifting no finger to the work, for on the morrow he would return to Seattle and smoke again in the house of the Dragon, while he watched the ebb and flow of custom in the place. Ten men in the hop fields for many days insured good interest on the money of the high-binder. He smiled grimly at the thought and clutched at the little bag which held a pearl too precious to leave behind him.

Among the Indians who chanced to be picking next to the Chinese was the girl with star eyes who saw this gesture and the answering flush on Ho Wing Sui's thin cheeks. Her interrupted surmisings on the station platform again broke into full gallop.

Yung Li only remained long enough to see that his countrymen caught the trick of stripping the hop vines to good advantage, then he returned to the tent and slept away the day.

Ho Wing Sui, too proud to ask any favors of the coolies by whom he was surrounded, was agreeably surprised by the nature of the work, but that did not dull his anguish at the ignominy of his position. For the thousandth time he reviewed the events which preceded his slavery—for such he well knew it was. Was it possible that three weeks before he had been the sole possessor of a fortune and master of servants, while now he toiled beside bond servants? Who then was his enemy? He had been so busy preparing for the Government examinations which he hoped would usher him into an official post that he had failed to keep up his former friendships, but at least he knew of no enemies. On the last night in China he could remember his only uncle, not much older than himself, had coaxed him from his studies and had taken him to many curious places. He shrunk from the looks and the odors of the last joint, but his uncle had laughingly told him that more was to be learned from life than from books and he had reluctantly followed him within. He remembered nothing beyond joining him in a drink, and when he woke up he found himself on the ocean in repulsive company, in coarse clothes, robbed of his money and even his rings; and when he tried to get satisfaction from the chief of the party, he discovered that the identification papers

described him accurately, even to a birth-mark upon the arm. In despair of convincing foreign inspectors of the truth of his story when he could not Chinese, he had silently borne his examination with his companions, trusting to escape later. Alas! he had tried once, he had been thwarted, and now what was left him when even his pearl was gone? The pearl his mother on her dying bed had pressed into his hand, in a little bag of her own work. Who would benefit by his disappearance? Undoubtedly his kindly uncle, for he was the next heir—therefore he must have done this treacherous deed, for by the evidence of the identification certificate, it was carefully planned even to the procuring of someone to impersonate him. In trouble of soul he raised his hand to cover the mist in his eyes, and when he took it down he beheld the Indian maid, straight as the firs in the surrounding hills, with compassion speaking eloquently in her glance.

Ho Wing Sui was astonished, he even opened his lips, but the girl unsmilingly lowered her eyelids and busied herself with the hop picking, humming a song.

"If I spoke she could not understand," thought the Chinaman, "and yet it looks almost as if she did understand." He glanced at the old crones about her, the young bucks and the brawny braves, and he marveled what manner of woman this might be. Her modesty and her dignity, her low voice as she spoke to her people, appealed to him more than the loud laughter and coquetry of the miners' daughters further down the line.

"Is she too a captive?" he asked himself, "a captive perhaps of the Indians—but they seem to obey rather than command her." For the first time in three weeks he forgot his own misfortunes in wonder as to this young woman. The girl divining this abruptly dropped her work and walked in the direction of the hop barns. From these tower-like buildings came the pungent smell of hops drying by furnace heat. Thousands of pounds of these were on every side fresh, dry, baled, sustaining the claim of Washington to the greatest hop crop in the world. Activity, movement, life were on every side of her; reaching her tent she sat for a moment wondering at the trouble she had seen in the Chinaman's eyes, but soon her attention was distracted by low voices at the back of her tent.

"We'll learn old Wolf to bring in Chinks to take the bread out of honest men's mouths!"

"When we went to him and stated our position he jest laughed and said he wished he could get more industrious Chinamen."

"Damn Wolf! Because he owns this big ranch and puts money in bank he needn't think he can walk roughshod over working men—we'll learn him!"

"How, Bill?"

"Turn loose on the Chinks."

"Sh-sh-sh!"

"What fer? This is Injun quarters, I ain't skeered of them understandin', or stoppin' us if they did "

"Who?"

"Well, six of us—you'll be number seven, pardner—we'll jest natcherly be practising with our firearms at midnight and by accident them Chinks will pass in their checks."

"Then a sheriff will be sent for—"

"Easy to lay it on the Injuns. It's a-goin' through all right, all right—but come on back to work, Tom."

Out of the girl's conflicting emotions sprung aims flamelike in intensity. She would save her people and she would warn the strangers. She returned to the hop picking and gave no sign of her resolve.

When the sun sank suddenly behind the gleaming top of Ranier and the lower mountain walls of the fragrant valley, the fields were deserted by the chattering hundreds. The Indians and the Chinamen alone remained. Yung Li, refreshed by sleep, walked ponderously down the rows of stubble, collected the tickets from his men and made his way to the pay office.

"At the last," said the girl to a man of her band, "get the money for all our tickets."

The inquiring eyes of the Indian rested on the daughter of his far-away chief.

"We will not wait for the end of the picking; as soon as it is dark we will start on the trail to Snoqualmie, for there are even larger hop fields—also we will go in silence."

To establish an alibi for her tribe was very simple, but to caution the strangers was a matter of difficulty. She was glad there followed a cloudy night, for she had dreaded the light of the stars that jostle each other in the firmament of Washington as nowhere else in the world. Watch as she

would, she found no opportunity to communicate with the young Chinaman, the chief's son, as she thought.

"Go," she said to her people, "one at a time, and leave this bundle in the first tree beyond the long trestle, unite there and go in a band to Redmond and make your presence known before the moon rises." Now as the moon did not appear before eleven she was satisfied that the miners could not charge any murder upon the Indians.

After the last of the tribe had been swallowed up in the dusk she slipped around the tents and hid herself in the underbrush near the quarters of the Chinese. She would have gone boldly to their tent, but a man smoked idly hour after hour on the fence in full view of the entrance—evidently he was there to see that the Chinese did not escape. By eleven o'clock a deep silence brooded over the ranch, for rising before the sun these toilers sought rest early. The Indian girl waited yet longer; she shivered in spite of her blanket.

"If I cannot warn them all," she said to herself, "I wish I might save the man who was sorrowful." She looked sadly at the moon, dimly visible through swiftly moving clouds.

"It is now nearly midnight and I have made no headway because of the watchman," she told herself. At that moment her eyes brightened, for was not the man's head sunk in slumber upon his bosom? She crept stealthily to the tent and called softly: "Mr. Chink! Mr. Chink!"

There was a smothered reply in an unknown tongue.

"He cannot understand me," flashed despairingly through her mind. Suddenly she remembered that she had hummed a song when he caught her looking at him in the hop fields. It was a forlorn chance, but she hummed the tune and in a moment the man she looked for stood near her, his paper-soled shoes deadening his footfalls. She motioned for him to follow and by signs endeavored to express his peril to him.



She covered his strange garments with her blanket and had barely gained the woodland path when a sharp volley flashed from behind the fence and the whole ranch rang with a sudden uproar.

Ho Wing Sui paled as he heard the sound, the moon coming out from the clouds gave him light to follow the girl's swift footsteps across the high trestle. She plunged into the wood beyond and presently thrust a bundle of European clothes into his arms. She motioned him to put them on and to wait



for her. Speeding back to the ranch she found crowds of curious men and women surrounding the gruesome sight of the lifeless bodies of the band of Chinamen, for the tent over them had been lifted literally off its pegs.

"Serves 'em right, the Chinks!"

"Don't know who done it."

"Old Wolf won't never try to bring no more Chinks here!"

"Well, then, why didn't they stay to home?"

Nowhere was there a syllable of compassion for the fate of these men.

Suddenly the Indian's keen eyes detected the little bag for which she looked. Yung Li in his death struggle had grasped the string. In the wink of an eyelash the girl had cut the cord and secreted the bag. Among the shoving crowd, under the flickering lantern lights, her action was unnoticed.

"There's just ten," said a man.

"But there was eleven," reminded another.

"Nit!" cried the first, "one of 'em went away early in the morning." Therefore no search was made for a survivor.

When the girl next stood before Ho Wing Sui and pointed out the way to Seattle, she handed him the embroidered bag.

Ho Wing Sui, astonished, touched to the heart, opened it. He passed over the American coins, earned by Yung Li's slaves, and held for a moment under the clear radiance of the moon his mother's last gift, then he pressed into the brave girl's hand, with smiling lips over white teeth, his priceless pearl.





WO Men and a Woman: A Story of Italian Prison Life, by Grazia Deledda. Translated from the Italian by Florence MacIntyre Tyson*



AMONG the prisoners who arrived at the Penitentiary on the 23d of March, as the setting sun was flooding with crimson its cold, grim walls, was a young man of distinguished appearance; he was dressed in gray, and the folds of his large, soft gray hat, adorned with a knot of gray ribbon, quite hid his pale, thin face, with its aquiline nose and carefully kept pointed beard. During the journey he had not spoken once, but sat with bent head and knitted brows, his eyes intently fastened upon his thin, nervous hands with their long, polished nails, enclosed in the shining bands of the steel handcuffs. On reaching the Penitentiary he had for an instant raised his head and fixed his shining, burning eyes upon the countenance of the Direttore, who on his side returned the gaze coldly and at length. By a queer coincidence, the prisoner and the Direttore had the same name—Cassio Longino! And they both knew it; and the prisoner, who in his distant country across the sea where "Cassio" means "a white petticoat," had often been the subject of many a caricature, experienced now a sort of bitter satisfaction, on seeing himself on that account sought by the cold, scornful glance of the Signore Direttore. With the first glance, the two men hated each other. The Direttore was approaching middle life, was small and stooped a little. His feet and hands were small, and the latter were always plunged in the pockets of his long, black overcoat. His clean-shaven face bore the marks of physical suffering, which was accentuated in deep lines about the pale, thin lips; his eyes were small and green and full of an almost cruel indifference; his hair was blond and short,

*Translated for Short Stories.

and his ears large and prominent. For all these reasons, but chiefly because he was the commandant of the prison, he was exceedingly displeasing to No. 245; and No. 245 was displeasing to the commandant on account of his haughty manner, the fiery look with which he observed him, and especially on account of his vigorous, superb youth.

While the prisoners were being consigned to their quarters, the Direttore did not open his mouth, and for several days, Cassio, shut up in a private cell, did not again see him. His cell faced the East, and through the tiny aperture pierced in the great stone rampart, he could see the distant Apennines, still covered with snow, and the Tuscan landscape, over which the early spring was scattering a vivid green sward, and the pale, tender coloring of bursting twig and blossom. In the Penitentiary garden, which was cultivated by prisoners clad in white linen suits and red caps, Cassio, who by especial permission of the Government retained his gentleman's clothes, watched the peach trees burst into a glory of intensest pink, and the apple trees toss their delicate bloom in rich masses through the balmy fragrant air.

A prey to keen anguish and despair, he never wandered far from his cell. The long, silent evenings overwhelmed him with despair; often he did not sleep at night, but tossed feverishly upon his hard straw pallet. When, in the morning, the guard, a great, tall fellow, whose red head brushed against the ceiling of the cell, would come in to make up the bed, Cassio was always dressed and standing before his tiny, barred window.

Outside the swallows were wheeling and fluttering about, their wings and breasts flashing in the sunshine. The prisoner did not deign to speak a word to the guard, nor did he take the slightest notice of the continual complaints, whistles, or gestures of his neighbor on the right; but when the exercise hour arrived and he was allowed to walk in the courtyard, he paced in haughty indifference, without even a glance at his companions, up and down the sad, dew-covered pavement.

The rumor spread through the prison that he was a very rich lord from Sardinia, a relation of the Direttore, and since the Direttore was feared and hated (though none of the prisoners knew the reason of this hate and fear, for the poor man had never done them any evil, except with his look of

icy indifference), No. 245 within a week after his arrival, was hated, and strange to say, was feared.

Having requested permission to write, the first of April he was sent for into the office; through the barred window there penetrated a ray of pale sunshine, in whose light danced the shadows of a distant treetop. The Direttore, bent more than usual, was working at a gray table; he neither moved nor spoke for a long time, during which Cassio, standing upright and stiff, his eyes fixed on the branches trembling in the sunshine, grew hot with humiliation.

Ah! in the presence of the others, of that crowd of criminals, and the vile guards, he could at least give himself the satisfaction of taking refuge in a certain, scornful dignity; he was stronger than those who bound him, greater than those whom he would not even deign to call companions in misfortune, but in the presence of this little man, so ill and full of disdain, he must bow, must reply, must humiliate himself.

"You," said the Direttore brusquely, turning around but not rising, "are condemned to three years of simple detention for forgery; and you may write only once a month."

His voice was rather weary, but the tone was pure Tuscan.

"I know it," replied Cassio, "but I have not asked to be allowed to write to my own home, but on my own account, in my own cell."

"It is not possible. Why do you not ask to be placed in the office of the clerks?"

"Is there chance of being allowed to do so?"

"Yes, there is every chance."

That very day Cassio proffered his request, and on the next was placed in the office, where a great quantity of work was badly executed by three other prisoners. The room, which was next to that of the Direttore, was even more desolate and gloomy, and the three clerks, the first, fat and bald, with small, bleared eyes; the second, fair, pale, and with a transparent look, and the third, a tall muscular young man, with black curly hair, and the face of a Roman emperor, made a bad impression on the new arrival.

They appeared resigned to, and even contented with, their melancholy fate. Cassio, on the other hand, experienced a profound disgust, which was but accentuated by the stupid resignation of his companions in misfortune—a very anguish

of impotent desperation, and regretted his request. Better to have remained alone in his cell, with his hands clasping the bars of the little window, and before him the distant Apennines, that brought to him memories of his own native mountains, resounding with the neighing of his black charger, dashing in pursuit of the straying sheep—alone with his sentence and his sorrow!

He of the curly head, bolder than the other two, who contented themselves with casting stealthy glances at him, sought promptly, though respectfully, to make his acquaintance. (They knew that he had the same name as the Direttore, and so it was told among the other prisoners.)

"Are you a Sardinian?"

"Yes;" replied he coldly.

"Since Fate has sent you to this place, allow me—"

"A beautiful Fate!" interrupted Cassio bitterly, and cut off sharply the compliment the unfortunate man was about to present to the presumed great Sardinian signore. But he said nothing more himself, nor asked anything of the others.

Three days later, there arrived for him from Sardinia a letter bearing an air of indefinable elegance. The handwriting was large and firm, while a delicious, almost imperceptible fragrance escaped from the sheets.

The Direttore opened it, and read it with a certain hesitation and half feeling that he had been expecting it.

After all, he was a man who was still young; he had suffered much and loved much, and if his own sufferings had produced that profound indifference which passed for cruelty among the unhappiness it was his fate to control, there still remained in his heart something of sympathy and compassion. Had No. 245 been a poor devil, like almost all the other prisoners, instead of a most interesting personality, the Direttore, after the first day, would never have given him another thought. But this handsome young stranger, with his haughty, distinguished air, who had arrived surrounded by a romantic mystery, had attracted the attention of everyone, as well as his own.

The queer stories current in the gloomy cells and dark corridors had also reached his ears.

The thought that there might be something of truth in them, had even begun to pierce his customary indifference

with a faint interest, which was augmented as he perused the letter.

Not that it contained anything of especial interest. It was written by a half-sister of Cassio.

An intense affection manifested itself through all the four sheets, a certain nameless sweetness, and exquisite suggestion of comfort and resignation.

"Have courage, Cassio, do not despair nor suffer too much; remember that we two are alone in the world, alone to love and believe in one another. The time will pass, and when God reunites us, I will know how to recompense thee for the immense sacrifice thou hast made for me. Do not feel humiliated nor cast down; the good know that thy fault was an act of heroism—"

"Indeed," thought the Direttore, "prisoners are always innocent, generally are victims, but that they should be heroes!"

This letter, so different from the vulgar epistles that were accustomed to come to the Penitentiary; so good, delicate, and loving, gave him food for reflection.

A sort of morbid curiosity took possession of him, against which he struggled in vain, to find out, to know everything. So that in spite of himself, though not contrary to the regulations of the establishment, which he scrupulously observed, he sent for No. 245, and on his arrival, he opened the conversation by explaining some difficult work to be done in the office, and then fixing a look of close scrutiny upon him, said:

"Here is a letter for you."

Cassio proffered never a word, but raised his head, and his face turned red to the tips of his ears.

And for the second time a wonderful thing happened. The Direttore of the Penitentiary envied his prisoner. For to the prisoner in his profound wretchedness, had come a voice of comfort and affection, illuminating his dark horizon with a glory that was mirrored on his countenance, and to him, free and powerful, alone and lost in the infinite sadness of deep suffering, there never came one word of tenderness, one ray of light.

In spite of his emotion, Cassio perceived something abnormal was passing in the mind of the Direttore, and astute Sardinian that he was, he took advantage to ask eagerly if

he might not have the letter at once and read it there in the office.

Better there, under the badly concealed indifference of the little, green eyes, than in the repulsive surroundings of his workroom, subject to the vulgar curiosity of the three clerks.

From that day, he became more sociable, more resigned, and the Signore Direttore showed him a certain deference which did not escape the eyes of the others, and but confirmed the report of an assumed relationship.

But still he did not receive permission to write until he had been there a month, though on the very day he was given two sheets. And his letter was not less affectionate than had been his sister's, though less sweet and delicate; in every line was displayed the agony of helplessness.

"I have been here but a month, though it seems thirty years. I am beginning to be more resigned. They have put me in the clerk's office, with three terrible strangers (this the Direttore erased), the work is hard, but it helps to pass the time. At first I could not accustom myself to it, now I am less desperate. The Signore Direttore is very kind to me. Yes, I know the time will pass somehow or other, but still I feel as if my sentence would be eternal; that the 987 days yet remaining are as boundless as the waves; but most of all do I suffer when I think of thee; and yet the thought brings me much comfort. Thou art so good. Please do not forget me and get married while I am away! But I am ashamed, my dear Paola, such a thing I well know is impossible. How could a good sister forget her unhappy brother? But all the same, when I am tossing sleeplessly on my narrow bed, the thought fills me with terror. Who could believe such a thing possible?

"Though I am now resigned to all, I did once believe in the justice of men. But what have they done to me? Write very soon and do not forget me. If that were to happen I would soon find a termination to my sufferings."

Not a word nor thought for anyone else, only for her! The answer arrived by return of mail, together with clothes, books, and money.

The Signore Direttore, felt anew the strange fascination of envy and longing, as he read the delightful, tender letter of Paola. She had not a word of reproach for the lack of confidence the unhappy man had shown in her, but said how

grieved she was that he should be so sad, and assured him she would never marry until his return. She had, too, a good word for the Signore Direttore. "Love and respect him; he can do much for thee; can be like a father to thee" ["a brother, young lady," thought the Direttore]. "I pray for thee and for him."

"Thanks," he murmured rather bitterly.

In the third letter, Cassio having asked what she was doing and how she passed the days:

"The days pass sadly in thy absence. I look after my affairs as well as I can, and often go into the country with my foster-parents. Poor things, they are a great comfort to me! We go on horseback, and these trips are my only diversion. In the house nothing new has happened. I am embroidering the tapestry I began at school, when my dreams were so different from the present reality. I am working into it certain rich Sardinian embroideries ferreted out by the foster-mother.

"I never see anyone, but am always thinking of thee and counting the days."

"Why in the world do not these people, who seem rich and cultivated, think of asking for a pardon," the Direttore asked himself, and, rising, he went into the garden, where the Tuscan spring was rioting amid a very glory of roses—crimson, white, and yellow; while gleaming among the deep green of the shrubbery, like brilliant butterflies, moved about the little red caps of the prisoner gardeners, and fell into a strangely sweet strain of thought of which the tender, strong sister of No. 245 was the subject. In fancy he saw her, tall and dark, like her brother, with the pallor and distinguished appearance so marked in the prisoner; or bending patiently over her embroidery; or else trotting on her little Sardinian horse, her eyes half closed as she faced the ardent beams of the midday sun. Then, lost in wonder, he took himself to task for such boyish romance, till he worked himself into quite a frenzy of anger at his foolishness, which left him exhausted and more indifferent even than was his wont.

And so the months rolled by, bringing three or four more letters from Paola. In the last she promised to send her picture, if Cassio was quite sure he would be allowed to receive it.

"It is allowed," wrote the Direttore at the bottom of the page before sending it to the prisoner.

For one, two, three weeks, in that great pile, under the overarching blue sky and ardent sunshine that turned it into a very furnace, two souls were awaiting with passionate eagerness, though under different aspects, that picture of a woman.

The waiting of Cassio was sweet and full of peace, amid the passive resignation that habit and hope had begun to plant in his heart. The pleasure of anticipation brought him almost a sentiment of happiness; he would rise up early in the morning with the thought that perhaps to-day he would receive it, and as he waited for the guard who came to conduct him to the office, he would turn to his little window and reach out his hands as if striving to gather in some of the freshness of the morning; and he was always thinking of the picture.

Outside the swallows were flitting and wheeling as they sang, their wings and tails gleaming in the sunshine; the yellow corn surrounded with its golden glory the shining green of the distant vineyards, while farther away, the watching Apennines shone in the luminous morning air. The prisoner called to mind the crimson dawns of his native mountains, brilliant with flowering yellow broom, then his thoughts turned to the expected picture, till he felt a vague feeling that was almost happiness.

The Direttore quitted his bed with a face even paler than was its wont, and he, too, thought of the picture; but his waiting was made up of a strange mingling of restlessness, bitterness and anger against himself, because he could not overcome his foolish curiosity, his foolish sentimentalism, the foolish interest "these people" awakened in him.

He went into the garden, and then into his bureau, and did his duty, performing all his tiresome work, and with cold eyes, and hands in his pockets, inspected those men clad in their prison garb of shame, but all the time he was waiting for the picture. In the bottom of his heart, under his anger and cruel indifference, there glimmered a spark of joy, from which a tiny ray sprang into his eyes and stayed there. And this spark, this hidden ray of light, burst into brilliant flame on the arrival of the picture, so instinct with life and loveliness and charm. She was not in the least as his fancy had pictured her; for hers was a blond and delicate loveliness. The beautiful dark eyes, in the delicately curved

lips and dimpled chin were suffused with an infinite sweetness. It was the same ineffable sweetness as filled her letters, a fragrance exhaled from every word, and this mysterious and suggestive fascination it was which had conquered the soul of this silent man, who was thought cruel and was feared and hated only because he was a poor dreamer.

The letter accompanying the photograph was, as usual, full of sweetness and charm.

"I was thinking of thee and smiling when the picture was taken; may it bring thee a little joy and comfort in hoping for better days. Read in my eyes all that I would fain say to thee."

Just here, the Direttore, too, looked into the eyes of the picture, then finished reading the letter, only to return to gaze on the picture, turning it so the full light should fall upon it, until the face seemed to assume a sort of reality, the lovely eyes to shine, the lips to smile.

"Oh, Dio! What a fool I am!" said Signor Longino to himself; but in his heart he was thinking, "How would this exquisite creature write to her lover, if she writes thus to her brother!" And then he fell to thinking sadly, that he was small, ugly, almost old, hated and feared by all those unfortunates whom his cold eyes dominated.

Once more he read the letter and gazed at the glowing picture, and—and that day neither the one nor the other were given to the prisoner.

That night the Signore Direttore had a queer dream; he thought a mutiny had broken out among the prisoners and they yelled and shook their chains and rushed upon him. He held Paola's picture in his hands and could neither move nor defend himself, for then the picture would fall to the ground and No. 245 would know that he had stolen it. But just as he was about to be killed by the prisoners, Cassio threw himself between, crying: "Leave him alone, for he is to marry my sister, and then he will become good because she is so good!"

He waked up bathed in perspiration, and passed the rest of the night sleeplessly tossing about his bed.

Cassio, in the meanwhile, was waiting patiently, though as the days passed a vague anxiety disposed his new-found repose. A week went by and still no picture came, and he had waited so long! so long! What could be happening over

yonder, beyond the sunlit sea among the purple solitudes of the fragrant thyme-scented mountains? Paola must be ill—or had she forgotten him? Cassio fell back into the agonized despair of his first days. He asked, but was refused permission to telegraph. With difficulty he got permission to write two days sooner than his allotted month.

His letter was so sad and full of despair, that the Direttore felt more than ever ashamed of his deed; for two weeks he had lived in torment, and while he seemed more cruel and hard then ever, his little, green eyes fell sadly upon the prisoners, for at last he understood how, against his will, a man might be led into crime. As he read the sad letter of No. 245, he murmured again: "But why do not they ask for pardon?" And he became aware that with the new-found pity awakened for No. 245 mingled a certain egotism of hope, that then he could speak frankly to the prisoner—one no longer—and say: "Signore, I may be a fool, but all the same I have fallen desperately in love with your sister, whom I have never seen. Will you give her to me for my wife?"

Paola telegraphed at once that she had sent another photograph by registered mail. In the eagerness for the peace of her poor prisoner, she pretended she had not sent a picture, and had been unable to write on account of a lot of reasons, which she detailed at length, principally she had been unable to be photographed before.

"How good she is!" thought the Direttore in admiration, and he felt inclined to write and tell her everything.

But of course he did not do so. "She will think I am mad, and will fear for her brother."

And so the summer passed and autumn approached; prisoners came and went. In the office the three clerks were not only resigned, but even happy, but showed an ill-concealed dislike for the haughty Sardinian, who, to an extent, was himself resigned. Only amid the sweetness of the autumn, when the dawn flooded the pure sky with crimson and gold or the setting sun threw his red beams on the sad walls, he was tortured with longing for freedom and home; and he fretted like a horse taken from his free pastures and shut up in confinement; but he was learning to control these rebellions and to immerse himself to the lips in hope and dreams of the future, till the present seemed scarcely a reality. But when winter came and the Apennines were black with storm

clouds, and the angry rain pelted incessantly the grim fortress, Cassio felt his nerves snap like cords stretched too far. During the day the three heads of the clerks, pinched with cold, the bleary blue eyes, the transparent profile, the head like the Roman emperor, appeared to him as in some tortured vision, awakening within him a brutal desire to seize some object and crush them to pieces. This desire increased from day to day, and was at times so intense that Cassio experienced the strange sensation of having realized it. Once in his cell he would come to himself and understand that he hated the three unfortunate clerks because they represented during those terrible winter days all the human power that was torturing him, against which his inmost soul revolted. His nights were almost sleepless. Outside the wind was roaring with a suggestion of distant torrents. Amid the darkness and roar of elements Cassio lost all perception of time, and as he tossed on his narrow bed, blessed visions came at last to his storm-tossed heart. The sighing of the wind in his distant well-loved mountains; the prints of the wild boar among the green ferns; the noisy stream bounding from rock to rock; the partridges flitting among the flowering oleanders; the joyful neighing of his black horse, and above all else, the smile of Paola.

But with the gray dawn, the sweetness of dreams was turned into bitter reality, and no one knows what might have happened to the three clerks had he not been one day providentially summoned to the Direttore's office.

The Signore Direttore deigned to ask a favor. He had been sent a little fragrant plant with a few slender, dry branches; it had come from Sardinia, and he wanted to know if the prisoner could tell him anything about it.

Cassio took the slender branches in his long, delicate hands, and inhaled its fragrance with closed eyes. The perfume brought him a vision of the green mountains of Gennargentu. An intense homesickness thrilled him.

"It is the tirtillo."

"The tirtillo. I thought so. The precious secret of the Sardinian shepherds, that gives its especial aroma to the Sardinian cheese.

Cassio bowed in assent.

"The famous tirtillo," continued the Direttore, "the new cure for epizootic."

"In Sardinia it has been used for centuries," replied Cassio humbly. "Many things that on the continent pass for discoveries are well known on the island."

The Direttore did not reply, but turned his back and resumed his writing, and apparently all was over, when suddenly turning around, he addressed Cassio without looking at him.

"Has a pardon been asked for you?"

"Yes; after the sentence in the Court of Cassation I appealed in the Giudiziarie of Cagliari."

"To whom did you appeal?"

"To the Ministry."

"That was unfortunate. The Ministry when appealed to never decides. Often the prisoner has finished his term before they arrive at any conclusion."

Cassio looked very grave.

"It would be better to send your request to the Queen; it would sooner be obtained."

"Pardon me," returned Cassio, bowing his head, "but is there a chance that it would be obtained?"

"If the request should be made by your sister, it would be granted," answered the other brusquely, and again he turned his back so that he should not see the prisoner's emotion, and the latter should not see the Direttore's confusion.

This time the conversation was really over, and Cassio was reconducted to his office. But he was really another man; the presence of his three unhappy companions aroused his compassion, but no longer his hatred. Around his thin fingers still lingered the fragrance of the tirtillo, and raising them to his mouth, he inhaled the fresh sweetness of his distant meadows.

And probably for the first time, the Direttore was sincerely loved by one of his prisoners.

Cassio wrote to Paola begging her to ask the Queen for a pardon.

"You can make the request for yourself, without having recourse to the formal process of the law. Explain things as they are. I hope and bless him who has counseled it."

And so the winter passed. In the limpid dawn of a February day, Cassio was standing before his grated window; his face was pale and bloodless, but his eyes were shining with

hope. From the Apennines which raised their lofty, white crests into the crystal azure of the sky, there came a delicious odor of snow; long strips of vivid green were scattered over the valley, and already in the garden the apricot trees were displaying their rosy blossoms.

Cassio felt his blood dance through his veins with the mysterious expectation of coming happiness; all the glories of the opening spring seemed reflected in his soul.

Another man, free, in his cold and melancholy rooms, felt the same tumultuous, though sweet sensation; his green eyes reflected the tender splendor of the budding season, his heart inclosed a precious shrine.

There came a day when the inquiry of the Ministry into the conduct of the prisoner, Cassio Longino fu Isidoro, reached him. The Direttore's reply was of the best. He did not know why No. 245 had been guilty of forgery, but he believed him to be an honest young man, of fine morals and excellent education. By the same mail he also sent to an intimate in the Bureau a letter that, coming from such a person as Signor Longino, could not fail of effect.

Whether it was instrumental in bringing about the result or not, the decree of pardon and order for freedom arrived very soon after—when Cassio had been there just a year.

Once more he was summoned to the Direttore's office. Outside, the air was balmy and fragrant, and the sky of deepest blue. Inside, the shadows of distant branches trembled in the sunshine that poured in through the barred window. The Direttore was seated at his table, but this time he rose as Cassio entered. The youth noticed it, but did not dare to give words to the wild hope that sprung up within him, but he felt his heart beat with a violence that well-nigh choked him.

"The decree has arrived," said the Direttore, and he was holding something in his hand.

"The decree?"

"The decree of pardon."

"For whom?" asked Cassio eagerly.

The Direttore began to lose patience.

"For whom but for you?" And he rejoiced in the deep emotion shown by the young man. So much the better; if the thing was so great as to seem impossible, so much the greater would be his gratitude. But then he thought sadly,

"Suppose his efforts should result in failure! If in the excess of his gratitude Cassio should give him false hopes!"

"For me! for me!" stammered the poor youth. For me! For how long?"

"For all the rest of your sentence. You are free—that is, not at once, but after a few formalities, in a week at most."

Gradually Cassio pulled himself together. At first he had gazed at the Direttore without seeing him. Now he began to look at him. He observed his pale face was flushed, that the air of physical suffering had disappeared, that the small, green eyes were shining.

He, on the other hand, was trembling violently, his face was ashy, his hands cold, and a mist floated before his eyes.

"This man is fine, when he is rejoicing in the happiness of another. How I have misjudged him," he thought. Then he asked himself, "But why did he do it?"

He was to know very soon.

The Direttore begged him to be seated; he showed him the decree, and profited by the moment in which Cassio was looking at the King's signature to begin:

"Now, I have something else to tell you. Listen and do not judge hastily. I have long been awaiting this moment and the thing seemed easy, but now I see I need great courage and you great indulgence if we are to understand each other."

He smiled sadly, and the old expression of suffering returned once more.

Cassio looked at him stupidly, still confused with the weight of his happiness, but beginning to gain his self-control. The other understood that his opportunity was slipping away and hastened to speak though, in spite of every effort, his voice trembled.

"I scarcely know how to express myself so you may understand everything; but I have confidence in your intelligence. Listen. I have done everything in my power to obtain that piece of paper there"—and he pointed to the decree, and Cassio, following his gesture, sat gazing at the sheet—"and above all, I did so because I felt you deserved it." ("Does he know my story?" Cassio asked himself, feeling that his deserts in prison had been very few.) "I do not ask for gratitude, indeed I will be thankful, if you will not allow that sentiment to influence you at all. I wish to speak to you as one gentleman to another." ("Heavens! does he think me a gran

Signore and wish to ask me for money?" thought Cassio. "I am not ungrateful, but what *can* he want of me?") "Now you are free and are at liberty to act as seems good to you."

"Speak," returned the other, with a sad impatience, "whatever lies in my power—"

"I do not know if it lies in your power."

"Speak! Speak!"

"Listen, but do not ill-judge me, nor think me insane. While reading your sister's letters, I have learned to appreciate so good and noble a soul, and—" ("Oh, Dio mio! he has fallen in love with her!" cried Cassio to himself, and the world grew suddenly dark.) "I have learned to love her. Do not laugh at me. I am still young!"

But Cassio felt small inclination to laugh.

"Have you written to her?" he asked brusquely.

"No, certainly not. Pray do not be offended. I have not allowed myself so great a privilege. Only to you—"

"But it is impossible, not to be thought of—impossible!" interrupted Cassio, striking as he spoke the paper which was laying on his knees, till it rustled.

"It seems impossible, but it is true; and though it may be strange, it is not the first time it has happened. My demand is serious, Signor Longino. Can your sister accept it?"

"What demand?"

The other thought a moment: "This young man is laboring under too much excitement, I was wrong to speak to him so suddenly. He is not in a state to hear it."

"My proposal of marriage."

Cassio did not reply at once. By a terrible effort he controlled himself. When the mist cleared from his eyes he turned and looked at the Direttore and beheld him as in the past, pale, suffering, and ugly, and into his terrible pain there fell one drop of comfort—she would not accept him—he felt sure.

"But," he asked, "have you reflected what you are doing? Have you written to my country and obtained information? In such cases—"

"I have not written. What would be the good? I know your sister, that she is good and noble, I desire nothing more. I, too, am all alone."

"You are too good. I do not know how to properly express my gratitude. Do not fear you are not understood. I

both understand and admire you. I feel myself greatly honored by your offer, and if it remained with me—but let me assure you I will do all in my power. Do not despair."

He rose and rolled up the pardon, looking at it with ill-concealed bitterness as he towered over the small person of the Direttore, who approached with extended hand to express his thanks. He asked permission to return to his cell and unroll his bed. Everything was granted him. As he threw himself on his comfortless cot he groaned in agony. Paola was not his sister, but his fiancée. For her he had soiled his honor, compromised his future and broken with his family. She alone remained to him. She had feigned to be his sister in order that she might write to him. And must he lose her now? That other possessed a splendid position, was good and noble. Had he a right to snatch such a brilliant future from Paola? He had sacrificed to her his honor and well-nigh two years of liberty, but she had not asked the sacrifice of him, and was it right that in exchange he should ask for her whole life? In any case she must decide for herself, and at the bottom of his heart he felt secure of her—but it made him wretched to think he had deceived and was still deceiving so noble and excellent a man.

"I will tell him everything, come what may," he decided after an hour of anxious thought, then uncertainty took possession of him once more. "No, I will say nothing. After all he has no right to know, and I will write when I reach home. After all he did it only because he wanted to on his own account. His cat-like eyes fill me with distrust; perhaps he would do me some harm."

Later he grew ashamed of his distrust and cried out loud in his lonely cell, "Am I indeed vile?"

Approaching the grating he stood gazing at the white, diaphanous clouds piled up on the horizon; they had assumed the shape and coloring of an alabaster staircase whose luminous steps disappeared into the unscaled heights. Cassio, as he looked, was overwhelmed with an intense homesickness and suddenly he felt good and pure, as if he had indeed mounted to the last step of those silver stairs and caught from that height a glimpse of his beloved native land. He murmured:

"Had it not been for him I should have languished here for yet a weary time. I might have died or committed some

madness. I will tell everything, let the result be what it may."

He waited anxiously the hour when it would be possible for him to see the Direttore, then addressed him in clear tones:

"See, Signore Direttore, I have been thinking of what you were good enough to tell me this morning."

"Very well," answered the other, though he feared for the result.

"Before entering upon the subject, please allow me to tell you in a few words of the strange circumstances of my condemnation, for," he added, smiling sadly, "I am bold enough to believe you do not think me guilty."

The other man said never a word.

"Listen. For ten years I have loved a maiden of my own country. She was rich, but an orphan living with her guardian. I was sent away to college and was absent many years. On my return I learned that the poor girl, although she had attained her majority, was kept in subjection and badly treated by her guardian, who had possessed himself of all her property. He gave her nothing, but kept her shut up and frightened with terrible threats. I succeeded in communicating with her and, finding that she loved me, I vowed to free her and restore her property. 'Let us be married,' she said, 'and I will fly with you.' But as my intentions might involve me in many difficulties, I would not accept her offer. I assisted her to take refuge with friends, and when she was in safety, I began my operations.

"And can you guess what I did? I almost think so. I forged the name of her guardian, and since he was very rich and well known at home and abroad and his credit was illimitable, I obtained a good deal of money. I placed all in the name of the young girl and waited. When the notes fell due, all became known. I had foolishly hoped I should be considered a hero. Instead I was seized, villified, condemned. My little property was taken, my family disowned me. She, alone of all the world, remains to me and she, Signore Direttore, is Paola."

The Signore Direttore remained absolutely silent. What, indeed, could he say? He only felt that Cassio's story and his own seemed impossible, though he knew but too well it was but too true. Cassio understood him perfectly.

"It is strange, impossible, is it not? Had I been told it, I would not have believed it."

"Life is strange," said the other at last, and he clenched his hands till the nails penetrated the flesh. The ways of destiny are indeed mysterious."

"He is resigned," thought Cassio, and he hazarded another remark.

"Life is often a terrible romance." But looking the Direttore in the face he saw an expression of such agony imprinted as caused him to retract his thought of a moment before.

"But see," he continued, "in spite of everything I will do all in my power to prove my gratitude."

"What do you mean?"

"Let me speak. It was my duty to let you know the exact truth, but you have been so good to me that I give you my word of honor, as a gentleman, that I will do everything—"

"What are you saying? What are you saying?" repeated the other in a strange tone, as if he were listening to distant voices, and not to Cassio's words. "After all, Paola alone can decide. I will tell her everything, as if I were indeed her brother and nothing more."

"Oh, no! No! What are you saying?"

"Nay, if you will allow it I will write this very day and we will await her reply. Perhaps when it comes I will not need to return to my own country."

"What are you saying?" repeated the Direttore; but now his voice had regained its strength and, raising his eyes, he looked Cassio full in the face. "You must not write, but return at once to your home where, I prophesy, every happiness awaits you. From the bottom of my heart I hope so. And yet, who would ever have imagined it! You are right, Life *is* a terrible romance."

"But," Cassio persisted, "let me write. I beg it of you as a personal favor. You will see the debt I owe you can never be canceled, and duty should be stronger than love. Paola will be much more fortunate with the Direttore than with me, and above all things I desire her happiness and well-being."

The other listened patiently; once his eyes flashed with a vivid light, but he remained immovable.

"See," he concluded, after having expressed his appreciation of Cassio's generosity, "if your duty is to prove yourself

grateful and generous toward the signorina, her duty is no less to make you happy and recompense you for all you have suffered."

"But—" interrupted Cassio.

"One moment—let me finish, please. If the signorina were to act otherwise, she would not be the noble, lofty being I have imagined her, and then my offer would no longer exist. Do you understand? Am I not right?"

But Cassio answered never a word and the Direttore turned toward the window. And the soul of each was full to overflowing. Cassio thought but of his happiness, and the Direttore reminded himself with bitterness that in any case his dream was lost to him forever.





SMALL Event: The Story of a Strolling Player, by L. Allen Harker*

❖ ❖ ❖

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth; each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event"! Why "small"?
Costs it more pain than this, ye call
A "great event" should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!—*Pippa Passes.*

EVERY night the "Alfresco Entertainers" gave their performance on a little platform set right under the shadow of the great cliff; while in front of them, not a dozen yards away, the rhythmic wash of the sea on a rocky shore seemed a sort of accompaniment to their songs, much softer and more tuneful than that of the poor, jingly, rheumatic piano, which had nothing between it and every sort of weather save an ancient mackintosh cover.

The village itself was but a shelf of shore with one long straggling, lop-sided street; cottage and shop and great hotel set down haphazard, cheek by jowl, all apparently somewhat inept excrescences on the side of the green-clad cliffs rising behind them straight and steep, a sheer five hundred feet, and just across the narrow line of red road lay the Bristol Channel, with, on a clear day, the Welsh coast plain in view.

At ten years old, people are generally found more interesting than scenery, and Basil took a great interest in the variety entertainers. The men looked so smart and debonaire, he thought, in their blue reefers, white duck trousers, and gold-laced yachting caps—though they none of them

*From Longman's Magazine.

ever put out to sea. There were five of them altogether, two ladies and three men. Basil did not care so much about the ladies, in spite of the rows of Chinese lanterns that outlined the little stage and shone so pink in the darkness; there seemed no glamour or mystery about them. They were not transcendently beautiful like the gauzy good fairy of pantomime, or the peerless, fearless circus lady in pink and spangles; neither did they possess the mirth-provoking qualities of the dauntless three clad in yachting garb. One always sang sentimentally of "daddies," or "aunties," or "chords" that had somehow gone a-missing; and the other—Basil almost disliked that other—sang about things he could in no wise understand, in a hoarse voice, and danced in between the verses, and she didn't dance at all prettily, for she had thick ankles and high shoulders.

But the three "naval gentlemen," as Basil respectfully called them, sang funny songs, and acted and knocked each other about in such fashion as caused him almost to roll off his chair in fits of ecstatic mirth. Nearly every fine night after dinner, if nobody wanted him, Harnet, the tall manservant, would take Basil, and they sat on two chairs in the front row and listened to the entertainment. Sometimes Grandfather himself would come, but he generally went to sleep in his chair at home; for when a man goes peel-fishing all day, walking half a dozen miles up the rocky bed of a Devonshire trout stream to his favorite pool, he is disinclined to move again, once he has changed and dined.

The bulk of the audience attending the "Alfresco Entertainment" sat on the wall separating shore from road, or on the curbstone, but there were always a few chairs placed directly facing the stage, which were charged for at sixpence each. Harnet was far too grand and dignified to sit on either wall or curbstone, and as Grandfather always gave Basil a shilling to put in the cardboard plate, Harnet preferred to expend it in this wise.

Now, all that company had high-sounding, aristocratic names, except one, who was called, as Basil said, "just simply Mr. Smith." There was Mr. Montmorency, the manager, whose cheeks were almost as blue as his reefer, and his wife, the lady who danced in the evening, but in the daytime affected flowing tea-gowny garments and large flat hats; there was Mr. Neville Beauchamp, who sang coster songs, to

whom the particular accent required for this sort of ditty really seemed no effort, as all his songs were given in similar pronounced and singular fashion. The lady of the melancholy ballads was called De Vere; she looked thin and young, and generally cold, as well she might, for she played everyone's accompaniments, and never wore a coat, however cold the night. But it was for Mr. Smith that Basil felt most enthusiasm. In the first place, his speaking voice was as the voices of "Grandfather's friends." In the second, he was, to Basil's thinking, an admirable actor—changing face and voice, even his very body, to suit the part he happened to be playing; and thirdly, he was funny—funny in a way that Basil understood. Even Grandfather laughed at Mr. Smith and applauded him, and when the cardboard plate went round, he sent Basil with the first bit of gold they had had that season.

"Clever chap that," he said as they strolled homewards under the quiet stars; "reminds me of someone somehow—looks like a broken-down gentleman; got a nice voice, and nice hands—wonder what he's doing with that lot?"

Basil, however, was quite content to admire Mr. Smith without concerning himself as to his antecedents. He forthwith christened him "the jokey man," and it rather puzzled him that, except at night, the jokey man was hardly ever with the others, but went wandering about by himself in an aimless and somewhat dismal fashion. Could it be that Mr. Montmorency and Mr. Neville Beauchamp were proud, Basil wondered, because they had such fine names?

Basil's face was as round as a full moon, and fresh and fair as a monthly rose. Tall and well set up, he was good at games, and keen on every kind of sport. Long days did he spend up the river with his grandfather fishing for trout—he was to have a license for peel next summer, but had to be content with trout during this. He went sea fishing, too, in charge of a nice fisherman called Oxenham, and caught big pollock outside the bay, and every morning Oxenham rowed Basil and Harnet out from the shore that they might have their morning swim, for the coast is so rocky and dangerous that bathing from the land is no fun at all, though the rocks are very nice to potter about on at low tide, when energetic persons can find prawns in the pools.

One day as Basil was busily engaged in this pursuit, who should come up behind him but the jokey man, looking as mel-

ancholy as though there were no sunshine, or blue water, or pleasant pools full of strange sea beasts. Indeed, although he was by profession such an amusing man, he had by no means a cheerful face. Tired lines were written all round his eyes, his shoulders were bent, and his long slim hands hung loose and listless at his sides, yet it was plain he was by no means old. Moreover, he had changed his smart yachting suit for an old tweed coat and knickerbockers, and a gray billycock dragged over his eyes bereft his appearance of all traces of a jokey man. So that for a minute or two Basil did not know him, even though he sat down on a rock close by and lit his pipe.

Basil was standing bare-legged and knee-deep in water in pursuit of a particularly active and artful shrimp, so that it was only when he at last lifted his head with an emphatic "Bother!" that he noticed the stranger; then he beamed, for chance had tossed plump into his lap the opportunity he had long been seeking.

"How do you do?" the little boy inquired politely, taking off his muffin cap with one wet hand while he grasped his net with the other. "I am so pleased to have met you; I've wanted to for ever so long."

"That's very nice of you," said the man, and when he smiled he looked quite young. "I am sure the pleasure is mutual."

"I've something most pertickler to ask you," continued Basil eagerly, scrambling out of the pool to sit on the rock beside him, "and it seemed as if I was never to get a chance. It's not for myself either, it's for Viola—you know Viola by sight, I dare say?"

Now, it happened that the jokey man, like most other people in that village, knew Viola by sight very well indeed. In fact, Viola, and the General, and Basil, were as speedily pointed out to every stranger who arrived as though they had been bits of the scenery. For they came every summer, and the village was proud of them.

"Is she your sister?" asked the jokey man, suddenly taking his pipe out of his mouth.

"Yes, and she's two years older than me, but *she* doesn't go to school—I've been for a year—she has a ma'm'selle. I dare say you've seen us with her. It's been such a bore having her here, but she's going to-morrow, and then we shall do just what we like, for there will be only Harnet and Polly, and

we like them. Grannie had to go off quite suddenly to nurse Aunt Alice, and won't be back for a week, so there'll be nobody but Grandfather and us; it'll be simply ripping," and Basil paused breathless, beaming at the pleasant picture he had conjured up.

The jokey man put his pipe back into his mouth and waited, but it had gone out, so he just laid it on the rocks beside him, saying, "What was it you wanted to ask me?"

"It's rather difficult to explain," Basil began, turning very red and rumpling his hair. "It's Viola, you know; she wants so dreadfully to come to your entertainment; I've told her about it, you know, but Grandfather says—" here Basil paused, and turned even redder than before; "one has to be so particular over one's girls, you know," he interpolated apologetically, "and she's the only girl in our family. Grandfather never had any sisters or any daughters, so he thinks no end of Viola, and father and mother are in India, and he says—"

"That some of the songs are vulgar," said the jokey man shortly; "so they are, he's perfectly right."

The jokey man looked at Basil, and Basil looked at the jokey man for a full minute. Then the little boy said very earnestly, "Do you think that you could persuade them—those other gentlemen I mean—to leave out one or two songs one evening? There's that one about the "giddy little girl in the big black hat" that Mr. Montmorency sings; grandfather doesn't like that one, and it's not very amusing, is it? And Viola *does* want to come so dreadfully."

The jokey man made no reply, but stared straight out to sea with a very grave face. Perhaps he was thinking of all those other Violas who listened night after night to the songs the General objected to, and were perhaps, unlike his Viola, not "cared about, kept out of harm, and schemed for, safe in love as with a charm."

Basil waited politely for some minutes; then, as the jokey man didn't speak, he continued earnestly, "You see, she can just hear that there is music and singing when the windows are open, and it's so tantalizing, and you see it would be rude to walk away when we'd heard you, and come back next time you sang, wouldn't it? It doesn't matter for boys—"

"I'm not all at sure of that," said Mr. Smith hastily; "it matters very much for boys too, I think—especially if they

don't happen to have wise grandfathers with good taste. I'll see what can be done, and let you know."

"Oh, thank you so much!" cried Basil, "that is kind of you. Viola will be so pleased; she's up the village now with Polly, or I'd fetch her to thank you herself."

Now, while Basil was talking he noticed that the jokey man's coat had got leather on the shoulders, and that the leather looked as worn as the coat, so he rightly deduced that at some time or another his new friend must have been something of a sportsman, and asked, "D'you fish at all?"

"Not here," said the jokey man, "but I've done some fishing in my time. Have you had good sport?"

Then immediately ensued a long discussion on the relative merits of flies, and Basil gave forth his opinion, an opinion backed up by the experience of numerous natives, that the "Coachman" was the fly for that neighborhood, but that there were occasions, especially early in July, when exceedingly good results might be obtained by using red ants. They told each other fishing stories. Basil confided to the jokey man that he had just got a beautiful new split cane rod from "Hardy Brothers," promised to show it to him at the earliest possible opportunity, and they speedily became the best of friends. For it is a curious fact that although the actual sport itself is a somewhat taciturn pursuit, there are no more conversational sportsmen in the world than ardent followers of the gentle craft.

Another thing—they were always courteous listeners, and generally full of good stories themselves, yet have the most delicate appreciation of other people's anecdotes. You can nearly always tell a member of a fishing family by this rare and pleasing trait.

Next morning the jokey man called at the hotel and asked for Basil at the door. He wouldn't come in, and when Basil, greatly excited, appeared, only waited to say hastily, "If you like to bring your sister to-night, I think I can promise you that it will be all right." Then fled before Basil could thank him, and was soon pounding up the steep hill that ends abruptly at the hotel door, as though he were training for a mountaineering race.

Basil tore back into their sitting-room to lay the case before his grandfather, who, for once, was lunching in the hotel.

"He promised, you know," he concluded jubilantly, "so she *can* come, can't she?"

Grandfather pulled his mustache and laughed. Then Viola came and laid her fresh soft cheek against his, murmuring pleadingly, "Darling, it would be so lovely," till he pinched Viola's cheek and made stipulations about heavy cloaks, and the children knew the day was won.

And the end of it all was that, at half-past eight that evening, Grandfather, Basil and Viola were seated on three chairs in the very middle of the road that ran past the "Alfresco Entertainers'" stage; but as the road ends abruptly in a precipitous rock some thirty yards further along, there is no fear of being run over by traffic.

What an evening of delight that was! How Basil and Viola laughed, and how pleased was Grandfather! Another thing is quite certain—that the "Alfresco Entertainers" in no way lost by the alterations they had made in their program; the rest of the audience seemed as pleased as Basil and Viola, and no one appeared to miss the "giddy little girl in the big black hat" the least little bit in the world.

"Really, it's vastly civil of Mr. Thingummy," said grandfather, on their way home.

Grandfather and Harnet had gone fishing for the whole day. Mademoiselle had departed, only Polly was left in charge, and she had so bad a headache—she put it down to the close, cloudy weather—that she was fain to go and lie down directly she had waited upon Basil and Viola at their lunch, having given the children permission to go for a walk along the beach.

It was a gray day, humid and still, and, being low tide, there seemed no fresh wind blowing in from the sea as usual. The children scrambled over the rocks, very happy and important at being, for once, left to their own devices, and they decided to make an expedition to a little sandy bay that can be reached from the shore at low tide, and to come back by a steep winding path up the cliffs which terminates in a coach road just above the village. They had not considered it necessary to confide their intention to Polly, who would certainly have objected. They reached the bay all right, paddled for a little time on the hard, smooth sand, and then set out to climb the path which winds in and out of the side of the cliff for all the world like a spiral staircase up to some nine hundred feet above the sea. This path is so narrow that

travelers can only walk in Indian file. On the one side is the steep face of the heather-clad rock, on the other a sheer drop on to the rocks below.

When the children had climbed about a third of the way they found themselves enveloped in white mist—a mist so thick and fine, and clinging that you cannot see your own hand held before your face. It was no use to go down again; the tide had turned, and soon the sea would be lapping gently at the foot of the pathway. There was nothing for it but to go on slowly, carefully, step by step, feeling all the time for the rocks on the inner side; by and by the path would widen.

"Don't be frightened, Viola," said Basil cheerfully. "It'll take us a goodish while, but a bit higher up we can walk together."

"I'm not exactly frightened," said Viola, in a tremulous voice, "but I rather wish we hadn't come."

"So do I," Basil answered fervently. "If I hadn't been such a juggins I'd have looked up and seen the mist on those cliffs long ago. Probably you can't see that there *are* any cliffs in the village now."

On they toiled, slowly and painfully. It is really a most unpleasant mode of progression, walking sideways up a hill with your back against a very nubbly sort of wall.

"Hark!" cried Basil presently. "Didn't you hear a call?"

The children paused, leant against the cliff, and listened breathlessly. Sure enough, someone was calling. It sounded very muffled and far off; but it was plainly a man's voice, and he was calling for help.

"Do you think it's above or below?" Basil asked anxiously. "I can't seem to tell in this fog."

"It must be above, or we should have heard it before. Call out that we're coming."

Basil shouted with all the force of his young lungs, and again the faint, muffled voice answered with a cry for help.

"Come on," answered Basil in great excitement; "we'll find him!" and sure enough in another bend of the path Basil nearly fell over the prostrate figure of a man lying right across it, for here it suddenly grew wider. The man raised himself on his elbow, exclaiming:

"I say, do you think that when you get to the village you could send help? I'm very much afraid that I've broken my leg. I can't stand, and moving at all hurts no end."

"Why, it's the jokey man!" Basil cried out in dismay. "However did you do it?"

"Oh, dear—oh, dear!" added Viola, "this is sad."

None of them could see the other, but nevertheless the jokey man knew in a minute who had come to his rescue, and forgot his injuries in his surprise, exclaiming, "Whatever are you two doing here? Is the General with you?"

"Oh, dear, no," said Viola proudly; we're *quite* alone, or we shouldn't be here, but isn't it a good thing we *are* here; how did you fall?"

"I was mooning along, not thinking where I was going, when down came the mist. I made a false step and went bang over the edge, but only fell on to the path below, not right over as I might have done. . . . Perhaps it would have been better if I had," he added to himself.

"You'd better go and get help, Basil," said Viola decidedly, "and I'll stay and take care of Mr. Smith till they come."

But Mr. Smith wouldn't hear of this. The children helped him to crawl as near the inner side as possible, and when they left him he nearly fainted with the pain of moving. It began to rain, the cold soft wetting rain of a Devonshire summer, and Mr. Smith groaned and shivered. "I am so sorry for you," said a soft voice close beside him. "Is there nothing I could do? Wouldn't you be more comfortable if you were to rest your head in my lap? It would be a sort of pillow. Daddie used to go to sleep like that sometimes out on the moors last summer, when they were home."

"Oh, Viola, Viola!" exclaimed the jokey man, with far more distress than he had yet shown, "why did you stay? You will get cold. It's raining already, and they will be ages."

"There's no use worrying about that," said Viola, edging herself nearer. "We couldn't leave you here all alone and hurt, and Basil wouldn't let me go on to the village 'cause of the fog, so of course I stayed. I hope you won't mind very much; I won't talk if you'd rather not, but I think I'd like to hold your hand if you don't mind. It would be comforting."

The kind little hand was curiously comforting to the jokey man; he insisted on taking off his coat and wrapping Viola in it, in spite of all her protests. Presently the white pall of mist lifted a little and they could see one another, and it certainly was a great pleasure to the man lying against the cliff to watch

the little high-bred face with the kind blue eyes turned in such friendly wise towards him. Viola was so like Basil, and yet so entirely individual. Basil's face was round, hers was oval. Basil's nose was broad and indefinite as yet, Viola's nose was small and straight and decided, with the dearest little band of freckles across the bridge. Basil's manner was extremely friendly; Viola's was tender and protecting, and it was such a long time since anyone had taken care of the jokey man, that he almost crooned to himself in the delight of being so tended. She was very tender in her inquiries after his aches and pains, expressed a pious hope that he always wore "something woolly next him," and being reassured on that head, proceeded to suggest that he should smoke if he found it comforting. Then she told him a great deal in very admiring terms about daddy, and Grandfather, and Basil, for Viola was of that old-fashioned portion of femininity that looks upon her own mankind as beings of stupendous strength and wisdom. The man lay watching her very intently, but it is not certain that he heard half of what she was saying. He had the look of one who was trying to make a difficult decision. The voices of habit and tradition called very loudly to him just then—dared he listen?

Presently Viola's voice ceased. She was evidently waiting for an answer, and none came. "Have you any sisters, Mr. Smith?" she repeated.

Mr. Smith shook his head, then raised himself on his elbow, saying earnestly, "Look here, Viola! I want you to tell me exactly what you think about something. Suppose Basil—of course it's utterly impossible, but still—suppose that when he was grown up he did something that annoyed you all very much, something disappointing and entirely against his father's wishes," he paused, for Viola looked very grave and pained, "and then," he continued, "if he went right out of sight, and you, none of you, heard anything more about him for nearly a year—supposing *then* he was sorry, said he was sorry—"

"We should never lose sight of Basil," said Viola decidedly, her eyes dark and tragic at the mere thought. "At least, I'm sure I shouldn't; whatever he did I should love him just the same. You don't love people for their goodness—you love them because they're *they*."

"Are you sure?" asked the jokey man earnestly.

Viola looked hard at him, turned very red, and said shyly, "Do you think you could tell me just what you did? I know it's you."

The man leant back against the wall again. "It's not an interesting story," he said wearily, "but it may pass the time. I was at the 'Varsity, Cambridge; I was always very fond of acting, and I was extravagant and lazy, too. The very term I went in for my degree I was acting in the A. D. C., and—I was plucked. My father was furious. Then came a whole sheaf of debts. He said I must go back to a small college, live on next to nothing, work, and take my degree. Instead of taking my punishment like a man, I quarreled with everybody, vowed I'd go on the stage, and came to this. I have kept body and soul together, and I don't think I've done anything to be much ashamed of since, but I'm sick and sorry at the whole business. Yet now that I'm all smashed up and useless it seems somehow mean to go back. My father's a parson, you know, not over well off, and there are a good many of us."

All the pauses in his story, and there were a good many, had been punctuated by Viola with reassuring little pats, and now that the pause was so long that he seemed to have finished his story, she turned a beaming face toward him. "How *glad* they will be!" she exclaimed. "You must write to-night directly you get back. How *glad* your mother will be!"

A spasm of pain crossed his face. "My mother died just before I left school," he said.

Viola's eyes filled with tears, and she had just exclaimed, "And you have no sisters either, you poor dear!" when the rescue party, accompanied by Basil and the nearly frantic Polly, appeared just below them. They carried the jokey man to the foot of the cliff and took him back to the village in a boat; and as his ankle proved to be very badly broken he elected to go into the cottage hospital on the hill. The long wait in the wet, that had not in the least hurt Viola, proved altogether too much for the jokey man. That night he became feverish and delirious, and when the children and the General went to ask for him next day, they were told that he was very ill indeed, and that the broken ankle was quite a small matter in comparison with the pneumonia. That evening the doctor called on the General, and directly the per-

formance was over, the General went to see the Alfresco players at their lodgings.

"Do you happen to know who his people are?" the General asked Mrs. Montmorency.

"He never let on that he'd got any folks, poor fella," she answered with a sob. She had a kind heart, if her ankles were thick. "He was never one to talk about himself, and he's never had so much as a postcard by post since he's been here, that I do know. His real name's not Smith at all; his linen—beautiful and fine his shirts are, too—is all marked 'Selsley.'"

"Have you no idea what part of the country he came from?" the General asked, "then we could look in a directory. It would be a horrible thing if—"

"He joined us in London," Mrs. Montmorency gasped between her sobs, while her tears made little pathways on her painted cheeks. "He hadn't any references, but I persuaded my husband to take him. He carried his references in his face, I said, and so I'm sure we've found it, for a nicer, more obliging, gentlemanly—"

"Do you think, sir," Mr. Montmorency interrupted, "that he told the little lady anything about himself when they were upon the cliff together?"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the General in great excitement, "of course he did; I have it. Who has got a Clergy List?"

Naturally none of the Alfresco players possessed such a work, and it was already too late to knock up the vicar of the parish. But next morning the General called on the vicar very early, and they dispatched an exceedingly long telegram to the post-office and several bottles of champagne to the cottage hospital, where Polly, Basil, and Viola hung about the doors all the morning hoping for better news. The Alfresco players got out a green leaflet to the effect that there would be that night a benefit performance for that talented artist, Mr. Smith, who had been suddenly stricken down by serious illness. The General seemed to send and receive a great many telegrams, and did not go fishing all that day. At sundown there was no better news at the hospital, and it seemed exceedingly probable that the jokey man would joke no more. The General met the last train, and drove away from the station accompanied by an elderly, severe-looking

clergyman. They stopped at the hospital and the clergyman went in.

The jokey man was so noisy and talked so continuously that the hospital authorities had him moved from the men's surgical ward into a little room by himself. As the matron showed the strange clergyman into this room, a nurse rose from the chair at the bedside. The jokey man's voice was no longer loud, but he kept saying the same thing over and over again. "All day long he keeps repeating it," she whispered. "I'm so thankful you've come, for he can't possibly last if this restlessness continues."

"I'm sure he'll come if you send," the weak, irritable voice went on. "Why don't you send? I want my father—" "father, I have sinned"—that's it—"father, I have sinned"—but I know he'll come if you send. I want my father, I tell you—why won't you send? I want my father."

The whispering voice persisted in its plaint, the hot hands plucked at the sheet when other hands closed over them, holding them firmly, and the voice he was waiting for said quietly, "My dear son, I am here."

As the sick man raised his tired eyes to the grave gray face bent over him, his troubled mind was flooded with an immense content, his poignant restlessness was calmed. "Good old father!" he said softly, and lay quite still.

The jokey man thought better of it, and didn't die after all. In another week Basil and Viola were allowed to go and see him. They stood very hushed and solemn on either side of the bed, for he looked very thin and white, and was still lying right on his back, which made him seem more ill somehow. For quite a minute nobody said anything at all, till Basil, who held a large folded bracken leaf in his hand, laid it down on the jokey man's chest and spread it out. A fish speckled with brown reposed in solemn glory in the midst. "It's for your dinner," whispered Basil. "It's only four ounces off the pound. I caught it myself two hours ago. Viola saw me do it. I think a 'Coachman' 's the best fly after all."





SITTING: An Episode of the Studio, by Virginia Woodward Cloud*



"YOUR expression has changed to-day."

"You say that ef-ry day, monsieur!"

"You do not come every day, although I told you that it were better if you did. I wonder if women who have little to do themselves ever realize that art is hard work."

Her smile was un-telltale, as she stroked with her right hand the leopard skin on which she reclined, then adjusted a heavy gold band which clasped her arm that hung over the pillar of the marble couch; but the painter did not raise his eyes.

"You mean that if the picture fail, if it is not so much a lik-a-ness to me, it is because I do not come ef-ry day? Oh fan-cy, ef-ry day!" She glanced out a vine-clad opening to where a long, yellow road stretched glaringly to the northward, and yawned. "I should die of it!" The movement was, like every indescribable grace, a part of her significant personality. The painter's blue eyes suddenly darted across the intervening space something between a challenge and a compelling question.

"Women have died, but not for art, madame."

"Hear him, the wise one!" she murmured. Her eyes smiled tolerantly between half-closed lids, the expression best adapted to her recumbent posture. But he dropped his own and compressed his lips as if restraining a retort. "You speak often like this," she pursued, "what do you know of women's art and—death, monsieur? Do you gain your knowledge from these ex-cel-lent Engleesh ladies who invite you to decorate their Teas?"

He flushed to his ingenuous brow. "You know that I do not go—when I can help it!"

"Ah—when you can help it!"

*Written for Short Stories.

"It is professional policy then," he added hastily, as he stood broad shouldered and erect beside his easel, turning a camel's-hair brush in vermillion; a manly combination of athletic strength and artistic delicacy. "I have to do it. A woman cannot understand the business part of it—a woman such as you, I mean."

"Such as I, and what sort is that?" Her eyes darkened slightly in their sea-like change.

"You would not have me be personal?"

"Per-son-al—um—that is to speak but the truth?"

"We will call it so this time, yes." He inspected her from another side. "Wait until I alter the shades above. 'Tis too light for a twilight effect. Women do not like the truth," he resumed.

"Oh! Oh—"

"I mean that it is harder for them to hear it without modification, and to speak it without reservation of that which is harsh. Otherwise they would lose their charm. They naturally reserve one-third and speak two-thirds irrelevantly. They, what we should call in hunting, double and cover."

"And is it so hard for you to speak the truth to me, monsieur?"

His face was hidden by the canvas now. "Harder not to," he began, then added, "anything that I may say to you will be the truth, madame. Make your left hand a little less listless, please, as it hangs over the couch."

"List-less? It does not listen enough? Oh, I see!" she laughed softly with pleasure. "He is wonderful, this painter!"

"Not I! It is the model who is wonderful, I assure you. Now I shall tell you a truth, madame. When you described the picture you wished, I hesitated."

"And why?"

"Because the pose was so full of artistic possibilities, so much more like a tragedy queen than the portrait of a lady, that I doubted your ability to sustain it."

"Ah!" she leaned forward and scrutinized him keenly, but he was looking at the picture.

"You have done it superbly, madame, and I have followed your suggestion in letter and spirit. In all this time I have merely lived in the present, asking not a question about you, speculating none concerning you, I have no idea which one of the many splendid villas here is yours, nor do I even know

your true name. You have appeared and disappeared twice a week, and it has pleased my fancy to think of you in this way—as the subject of the picture," he broke off rather lamely.

"It is my real name that I gave you," she said gently. "I, too, have spoken the truth to you, monsieur, and have but re-served, as you say, all commonplace detail about myself that you might better employ your imagination. Has it not been well?"

"Yes, yes; most well, that part."

"And what part has not been well?"

"Oh none, none, of course! Fool! Fool!" he muttered, adding aloud, "but you must always make allowances for the whims and vagaries of the artist, madame. They are hard to endure. I'm awfully rough on a model!"

"I do not think so. You speak much about art, monsieur, you think that there is no art but that of painting?"

"Heavens, no! But one always must think one's own the greatest."

"Ah, yes!" Her eyes grew suddenly dreamy and, regardless of the pose, her hands slipped under her head. The brush before the canvas stopped and there was silence for a moment, then he spoke with a forced note of brusqueness making his tone harsh.

"I do not know which is the more beautiful. How can one untrained to it pose to such perfection! It is exquisite."

She laughed softly with an underlying cadence of tenderness.

"No, no, 'tis the painting. It is easy to pose for you, monsieur."

He shook his head. "You are a mystery!"

"True, monsieur, being a woman."

"How can one reared in a convent—"

"Oh, not always—educated, I said."

"Educated in a convent, and afterwards leading the life of society—"

"No, no, monsieur! I did but say that you know the lives most women lead. I—in truth, I go into the world less than most of them."

"It is all the same. I have wondered why a woman surrounded by conventional life should choose such a pose. The majority of them wish to be painted in a Gainsborough

hat and plumes, or a long skirt and hounds behind them, or a white décolleté with a black fur boa, but you—"

"I nef-fer said what my pose is, monsieur. That is for you to feed your imagination upon. I saw a portrait by you and was pleased with it, and with the idea that you needed less conventionalized subjects, I wished to give your imagination what you call 'fair play.' Therefore, I chose a pose out of the ordinary and did not tell you many stupid things about myself, but left you to paint me what you would."

"I think that I know our subject, madame. At any rate your suggestion was as a draught of life to the thirsty. You have been my greatest inspiration—for the time."

"Ah—for the time!"

He sighed slightly. "Must not the next subject be likewise an inspiration?"

"Yes, yes; 'twill be one of the pretty young En-gleesh, I sup-pose."

"I wish that it were, but I have an order which I am truly not keen about."

"And who is it? You know we speak the truth to-day, monsieur!"

"Oh, I have been as recklessly confidential with you, madame, as I should have been with a fellow artist!"

"Thank you."

"I am to paint Suzanne Vernot, the actress."

He painted in silence. Presently she said, softly:

"You say you do not wish to do that—paint Mademoiselle Vernot—and why not?"

"A trite reason. I find them pretty much alike—capricious, uncertain about their appointments, impatient, vain, and utterly spoiled. She is living some miles to the North, I believe, and hearing that I am wintering here in seclusion, she has taken a whim to spend next month here and have me paint her. I cannot very well refuse, but—Oh well, this is treason!"

He painted steadily, and her eyes rested upon his head with a peculiar and sad gentleness.

"The truth is no treason, monsieur, besides, I shall not tell you—Mademoiselle Vernot, if I see her."

"Not mine, Heaven forbid!" he murmured.

"I do not quite understand why you dislike her—this Mademoiselle Vernot," she said.

"No one reason, perhaps. Most of the women who gain eminence in an art are so arrogant, so—audacious," he laughed a little retrospectively, "women of her stamp, I mean." The hand hanging over the marble pillar contracted as if it clinched involuntarily, then she said:

"Do you know aught of her, monsieur, other than through her playing—her acting, I mean?"

"Nothing at all," he said, lightly.

"Then why judge her? May she not be an artist also?"

"Yes, yes, by all odds—a great tragic artist, too."

"Ah!" she breathed, "then what is the reason for this dis-like, monsieur?"

"Oh, I suppose, only an Englishman's antipathy to seeing a woman made public property—her name on every lip. I have no desire to paint her after—after you. Jove! I read the other day that she keeps a tiger whelp as pet, and carries a chameleon by a diamond chain on her neck. Her neck, fancy!"

Her expression slipped back of her white lids in a hidden smile.

"May it not be, monsieur, that our press is not altogether like yourself—a truth-teller? She may only keep the creatures in the public's imagination. Ah, it is a peculiar thing, the public's imagination!" A slight sarcastic smile touched her lips with bitter meaning, "When you give it food, it refuses to be fed, but starve it, and—*ma foi!*—how it feeds upon nothing!—perhaps, too, this Mademoiselle Vernot has struggled, has made herself, as you say—has fought her fight. It may be a hard life, the life of a professional women, monsieur"—if her voice had not been always full of pathetic cadence it would have sounded impassioned, pleading.

"I doubt that it was ever intended that they should be professional," he said.

"Ah, sup-pose someone had said you should not be painter, then?"

"I should have been one anyhow," he retorted. She laughed enjoyingly.

"And sup-pose they had said '*You cannot paint!*'"

"I should have known better!"

"And sup-pose they had said: '*What, artist? painter?—mon enfant, you cannot be that because I have said you shall be un bon mari—a husband Eng-leesh, being attentif to*'"

what you call the far-r-m, riding many hours a day in the rain over much very dirty earth, and having an attachment to cat-tle, and the school peek-neek,' what should you have done, monsieur?"

He laughed. "Run away!"

She clapped her hands delightedly, then fell back into pose.

"Ex-actly. It was what I—it is maybe what a woman would do, monsieur, if they say to her, 'mon enfant, you cannot go to be the artiste! True, true, you may be born artiste, but what does Le Bon Dieu know of art? It is more—what you call—*important* to marry. I have choose you shall marry a little vis-compte, who looks like a monkey; a very little and black monkey. 'Tis true, but what of that? I choose! You must marry and be obedient to the monkey"—

He stopped painting suddenly and turned his eyes piercingly upon her with something escaping suppression.

"Madame! Do not forget that we are under the ban of confidence—did you marry the vis-compte?"

"Monsieur? I speak of artists."

"One may be artistic and not trained to any art," he said.

"You are an artist by instinct to your finger-tips! Yet you have no art. I mean.—Oh, you know what I mean!" She smiled gently.

"It may be that I do—*play* a little, monsieur."

"*Play* a little! What every English school-girl says! What has that to do with art?"

She smiled contentedly at what he would have called his "bullying."

It was a delicious novelty. "Superb!" she murmured. "He is real-ly what they call r-r-rude!"

Suddenly his look compelled hers, and he flushed to his brow, then flung his brush down, and strode toward her, defiant, fearless.

"If I am only rude," he muttered, "sometimes you—sometimes I cannot—Oh!" he broke off, and wheeled again to the easel, all unaware of the strange look bent upon him, a look blent of tenderness, possible joy, and yearning regret.

He took the brush up again without looking at her.

"You did not tell me if you married the vis-compte, madame."

"And why, monsieur? What has it to do with—the picture?"

"Everything!" He threw his head back suddenly, and blazed upon her, but she met his look with such unflinching gentleness that his own lowered. "I beg your pardon—you are right—nothing," he said.

"No; I will tell you, monsieur," she said softly, "although you call me 'Madame' I did not marry the monkey-man. I was very young, and had ambitions, as the young will have—ideas about being an artiste—I told you that I play a little."

"Violin or piano?" he said mechanically, and she smiled again.

"What matters that? I am speaking now of the past. I had the feeling that an artist should not marry."

"Right!" The word was forced through his teeth.

Suddenly her tone changed, in spite of her, to something almost motherly, "An artist, monsieur, is one apart—un solitaire. Art is the creative life, and its wings are the wings of the immortal butterfly—beauty. They must not be held too close-ly."

"How do you know that?" he muttered. "There, do not move your hand, it is perfect so. It speaks."

"Oh, monsieur! First it does not listen, now it speaks!"

Suddenly he flung his brush down again. "It is no use, I cannot paint to-day! Do you know the pose you have chosen, madame? It is in Shakespeare's 'Cleopatra'—do you know it?"

"I have read it in the Eng-leesh," she said demurely.

"Cæsar's messenger should kneel here," he bent before her, "but it is implied in your pose. 'Shall I say to Cæsar what you require of him?'" he said.

"Tell him that I am prompt to lay my crown at 's feet!" she murmured.

"Madame! You know the text—Shakespeare's text!"

"I said I have read it in the Eng-leesh," she answered.

Suddenly his eyes grew reckless.

"Give me grace to lay my favor on your hand' . . . " he murmured.

Her hand relaxed slightly, and his lips were upon it, broken by stifled and impassioned words. It was but an instant, then she drew it away and it touched his hair with an almost motherly touch of tenderness.

"No, no, monsieur. You have been most good to me—I am honored."

But he stood before her maddened by the light of the moment, and threw his hands out blindly:

"It is no use—I have struggled all these weeks—have mercy—I am yours!"

For a second there broke through the wistfulness of her face something beyond words—the yearning of a wave-beaten soul towards a sure haven, and her hands involuntarily moved outward, then they dropped to her sides and she slipped past him with a broken sound that was not quite a sob.

"Yes, yes! Mon ami—I will have—mercy—"

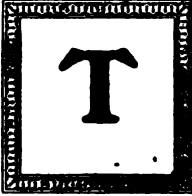
"Stop!" he sprang after her, but her hand was on the dressing-room door.

"Never!" she said. "Monsieur! The picture; it is nearly finished. Remember a line to go beneath it:

"Say to him that I hear the doom of Egypt . . ."

A few moments later, heavily veiled, she sank back in her carriage.





HE Furnishing of Pat Maguire: An Irish Love Story, by Winifred Boggs*



BY a certain Irish hamlet on the Atlantic there are cliffs that rise sheer from the sea; beneath them, far down, the black waters seethe and bubble as they dash into grim dark caverns, rushing past out-jutting crags with a whirling roar of foam, breaking with a deep crashing boom against the impenetrable sides of the gloomy cliffs, which, in their cold, stern grandeur, seem to gaze at the impotent fury of the waters in calm, measureless contempt.

Here, on the top of these northern Irish cliffs, Biddy M'Shane stood motionless one night, watching for signs of life to pass into the field track which led zigzag to where she waited.

The night grew later; the wind died down; the moon, coming out of a small rift in the sky, turned the great gleam of the waters into iridescent pathways of silver; but still the girl's eyes turned westward.

There was a great stillness lying over all the land, so deep, so quiet, that Nature and all things living seemed at rest; the spirit of silence seemed brooding in the air, save when, now and then, the dark sails of a fishing-smack came, like dreams, drifting through a silver sea away to the Isles of Sleep.

Presently a welcome sound struck upon the girl's strained ear—the sound of merry-makers as they came home rejoicing with song and shout from Kilbahkarrak Fair.

Up the winding path streamed a group of men, with here or there a woman in their midst, wives or mothers, and Biddy M'Shane leaned eagerly forward to scan the faces of the advancing figures as the moon revealed them one by one to her.

* From The Leisure Hour.

Then she drew back with bitter disappointment—the face she looked for was not there. She shrank into the shadows, hoping to remain unobserved while the roysterers passed. The first few noticed nothing, but the second lot, composed chiefly of women, were less easily deceived; one of their number sprang forward and caught the girl by the arm. "Why shure an' it's Biddy M'Shane, no less!" she exclaimed shrilly, then letting her go, with a loud laugh, "Is it waitin' for the fairin' ye be?"

"Let me be, Kate Flanagan," cried the girl angrily, darting down the path out of reach.

With a laugh and a jest the fairers passed on, and as their voices died away in the distance, silence reigned once more.

The girl resumed her old station, and presently a man's solitary figure made her heart beat high with anticipation; then as the moon shone on fair, not dark, hair, and a man of large instead of small stature, her hopes fell again, and she stood sullen and resentful awaiting his approach.

"Why, Biddy, can it be yezself?" cried the man, amazed, as catching sight of her watching figure, he sprang lightly to her side; "'tis little I hoped to see ye this noight," and he came closer, looking eagerly into her eyes.

She returned his gaze with indifference.

"'Tis not for ye I be waitin', Pat Maguire," she replied, turning away.

The young man's face fell.

"Arrah, now, Biddy, 'tis teasin' ye be," he said anxiously; "wait till I tell ye what I bought at the fair."

She looked up with a faint glint of curiosity.

"'Tis nothin' to me, thin," she said, tossing her head, adding in the same breath, "Ye can tell me if ye like."

"Well, thin, an iligant rockin'-chair an' no less," with triumph.

"Ye niver did!" incredulously.

"It's thruth," he replied solemnly. "An' that's not all, either," fumbling in his pockets as he spoke. "See here, Biddy allannah."

Something flashed in the moonlight, and Biddy gave an exclamation of amazement as a little paste butterfly brooch was dropped into her hand.

Never had she seen anything so beautiful before; she gazed at it with dilated eyes and parted lips.

"Rale Oirish dimons the sellar tould me," said Pat Maguire, proudly bending his fair thatch of hair low over the girl's palm, and taking jewel and all into his own brown fingers. "It'll look lovely in yez shawl on Sundays," he murmured admiringly; "shure an' it'll be breakin' the hearts of all the other colleens ye'll be, with yez beautiful face and rale Oirish dimons!"

The girl hesitated; then she turned away from the glittering bauble.

"I cannot take it, Pat Maguire," she said in a low voice; "kape it for yez swateheart."

"But it's yezself that I want for me swateheart," began the tall young Irishman blankly.

"Haven't I tould ye now," reproachfully, "that I'd niver take ye for me bhoy?"

"Och, Biddy, don't!" cried Pat in a sharp, pained voice, "shure it's the loight of me eyes ye are, the—"

The girl pushed him away with no gentle hand. "Git away, ye great nuisance," she cried, with an angry sob, "it's no peace I have wid ye at all, at all. Ye know what I am waitin' here for, and niver a word of him, good or bad. Where is Harry-Bagh?"

"I moight have known," whispered Pat bitterly; "always that wastral, that—"

She turned on him like a wild cat. "Ye shall not say a word against him!" she replied fiercely. "Where is he, thin—where did ye lave him?"

Old Adam was too strong for Pat Maguire, he told the crude truth when a little softening of the facts would have been more gracious.

"Dead dhrunk in the ditch comin' along," he answered roughly.

"Ye—ye coward, ye mane-spirited coward!" cried Biddy, with flashing eyes, "lavin' the poor darlint to catch his death of could in a damp ditch—for shame on ye, Pat Maguire, for shame! 'Tis no dacent Oirish bhoy ye are, but a low croil murthering thafe. Take that," and reaching on tiptoe, the young virago struck the big Irish lad a stinging blow on the right ear.

Pat caught the offending hand and held it tightly, shaking the girl gently.

"It's a damon ye are, for shure!" he muttered admiringly,

liking the girl none the less for her show of spirit. "It's locked up or married ye should be."

"And it's rather locked up for life I'd be than married to ye," was the reply.

For a few moments there was silence, then—

"Well, what do ye want me to do?" the young man asked unwillingly.

"Ye know what any dacent bhoy would do."

"Fetch him home?" sulkily.

"Yes."

Another pause, a longer one this time.

"Well, I'll do it," he said at length, in anything but cheerful tones, "if ye'll give me—" he paused, confused by the scathing light in the girl's eyes, "if—if ye'll kape the brooch, I mane, an' wear it on Sunday."

For answer, Biddy pinned the jewel in her bodice, and pointed down the path.

"Now, thin, be quick wid ye," she said imperiously, "it's gettin' damp."

The young man turned away, murmuring savagely—

"*I* could be layin' in wather all noight before ye'd moider yezilf about *me*."

"The loikes of ye are big enough, and ugly enough, to look after yezselves," was the reply, "an' ye can stan' more dhrink than Harry-Bagh."

"Deed, thin, if I took half—" began the young man, injured, but Biddy was already pushing him down the slope.

"It's slow as death ye are!" she cried impatiently; "what are yez great long legs for?"

"I'm goin'."

An extra hard shove down the steep incline, and the angry Pat was indeed "goin'."

"Good-noight, an' hurry now," called out Biddy before running home, and slipping into the small, full cabin without waking the slumberers within.

It is to be feared that Harry-Bagh's passage home was a trifle uncomfortable, and that he would not have blessed Biddy for being the cause of the disturbance of his sweet slumbers in the ditch.

Biddy M'Shane was the prettiest girl in Limnagarry, a place where pretty girls were the rule rather than the exception. Needless to remark, she had numerous admirers, the

most eligible, as well as the most persistent, being big, plain Pat Maguire, a distant kinsman; the least eligible, and most indifferent, was the village Adonis, the black-haired, black-eyed, natty Harry-Bagh.

Pat had a cottage of his own, and almost enough land to constitute a small farm, in the imagination of Biddy's mother. He lived entirely alone, yet his cottage was a model of neatness; it even boasted a few articles of real furniture, and besides the living room and kitchen combined, had two others.

It was the envy, the despair, the secret hope, of all the unmarried women from fifteen to fifty.

While Harry-Bagh—though his hair was a mass of purple-black curls, his black eyes fringed with dark, thick lashes, his teeth of dazzling whiteness, his merry mouth red and shapely with health and youth, and his small form the essence of dandified elegance—had nothing.

He had friends and sweethearts galore, spirits that nothing could damp, and a humorous view of life that infected even the most destitute, but of worldly wealth not a *son*.

He occupied, in company with his parents, nine brothers and sisters, his grandmother and an aunt, and—the pig, a small tumble-down cabin on the Limnagarry road just where it branched off into Blackberry Lane. It was perhaps the most picturesquely situated cabin in the whole country side; a winding lane with high wild hedgerows led to it; behind it rose the purple mountains of Donegal; beside it, to the right, lay the sea, with grassy slopes, one blaze of sea-pinks. Outside the most picturesque, and inside the dirtiest in all Donegal!

By trade Harry-Bagh was, like his rival, a fisherman; young and old, for many miles round, all earned their living in this manner. To see Harry-Bagh off to the shore with his black eyes twinkling, the gleam of his teeth showing through his merry lips, his red fisher-cap set jauntily on his thick dark curls, was to behold a joyous sight that many a blue-eyed colleen waited to see.

To see him come back with his share of the spoil, whistling lightly as he sorted it out, his red cap farther back, his hair dashed with spray, while his dark Spanish face glowed with the sea's brown health, was to see, if possible, an even more joyous sight. Nothing disturbed the even tenor of his

happy-go-lucky way. He went to a fair whistling "Kathleen Mavourneen"; he came back after a night spent quite happily in the ditch or lock-up, still whistling "Kathleen Mavourneen," a smile of good-fellowship on his devil-may-care face.

Though by far the most worthless of all the young men about, and the one that cared least about Biddy, she, out of sheer perversity, set her fancy upon him. When she wanted anything, when she was in trouble, when there were grave matters to be settled, the honest, well-meaning, stalwart, but plain-featured Pat was the one she took counsel with.

Ever since he had been old enough to know what he wanted, Pat had wanted Biddy, and Biddy alone; for him no other girl existed. Till Harry-Bagh's conquering black eyes had glanced into hers, Pat's suit had prospered well enough, and he had worked hard early and late, at his little patch, cultivating the ground and rearing pigs and poultry with well-merited success.

Owing to his industry, he was at last able to buy a small boat and fishing-tackle, so that everything was clear undivided profit, and he grew, in the eyes of the primitive Irish poor, almost a man of wealth.

It had become second nature to him to make fair his home for the time of Biddy's coming. He still toiled on doggedly, hoping against hope, for he told himself, not always with conviction, that come she would in the end.

Early the next morning after Harry-Bagh's late arrival home, he was on the beach as usual, none the worse for his little indiscretion. He strolled about from one girl to the other, exchanging jests and compliments, saying the same to Biddy as he said to all the girls with any pretensions to beauty, while Pat Maguire stood a little apart looking on with a jealous scowl, and perhaps expecting a word of praise from Biddy for carrying out her commands.

On her part she wondered why he did not come up and speak to her, and something akin to annoyance seized upon her spoiled whims when he went off with the boats without one word.

Harry-Bagh waved a smiling good-bye all round; Biddy could not flatter herself it was intended more for her than the others. She knew and deplored his light, fickle nature, but went on coveting his love all the same.

In the evening, when the boats came home, it was much the

same; again Harry-Bagh jested with all alike, while Pat Maguire, without a word, walked dourly home.

For a few days things went on in this very unsatisfactory manner. Biddy wore the brooch on Sunday to the undying envy of all the other girls, but Pat never came to mass, and when she took it off and put it away in an old tin box, angry tears marred the brightness of the jewel.

The next day Harry-Bagh's mother, Mrs. O'Grady, waddled up to her with a wide, good-natured mouth gabbling long before she was in earshot.

She came up panting and breathless, her hands pressed against her fat sides. "Arrah, thin, Biddy, me jewel, 'tis yezself I've been wantin' to see all this long weary day," she began rapidly. "I've been insulted that never was, wid that wastral Harry-Bagh's foine young English miss."

"Who?" faltered Biddy.

"Haven't ye heard? Shure it's the bad bould heart the bhoy has!" lifting up her hands in mock horror, and trying hard to suppress unbecoming signs of pride. "Ye know that foine English lady's-maid her ladyship brought down?"

"What has she got to do wid Harry-Bagh?" asked Biddy uneasily.

"Shure 'tis his latest swateheart she is—no less, but wait till I tell ye. Harry-Bagh was for bringin' her in to tay, so I put out the china, an' gave her the uncracked mug, I did too—the cratur! An' I dusted the seat of the chair, an' set boxes roun', an' a proud woman I was the day, Biddy M'Shane, wid the foine choilder, an' ducks, an' hens, an' the sides of the pig hangin' up to dry, an' fresh eggs for me foine lady, an' rale bread an' butter, an' everything so genteel an' iligant."

She paused for breath, the girl waiting anxiously for her to continue.

Presently Mrs. O'Grady got started again. "Yes," she went on, "all so foine and iligant, an' I waited for her in me grand new clothes I'd bought second-hand at the fair, an' where the body of me wouldn't meet, I wore Tim's Sunday waistcoat, an' it was a rale trate I was, me dear, though I says it as shouldn't. An' presently came Harry-Bagh an' his English miss, an', by St. Pathrick, what do you think the cratur wore?"

"I can't think," breathlessly.

"A rale silk petticoat, no less," in awed accents.

Biddy's amaze and disgust were great enough even to please that lover of sensation, Mrs. O'Grady.

"It's thrue, an' that's not all, for she lifted her skirts that hoigh, when she come in, and there were silk stockin's an' shoes that small, with tremendjious heels, just like her ladyship's. An' she walked like this, turnin' up her long nose,"—Mrs. O'Grady walked in absurd imitation of her guest's manner, turning up her ridiculous little nose sky high—"an' when she saw the ducks—the darlints—in the cabin, she squealed and said, 'Oh, gracious! the *kanimals* have got into your 'ut'—called it a 'ut.' An' was so ignorant she didn't know where the fowls lived! Thin, after I put tay in the taypot, she got up and held her foine hankerpiece to her face an' walked off wid Harry-Bagh, saying she couldn't stand 'the low, common *Hirish*.' Now," speechless with indignation, "what do you say to *that*?"

Biddy could have said a good deal, but more of Harry-Bagh's fickleness than of his mother's injuries.

She walked home rather thoughtfully. She could not help contrasting Pat and Harry-Bagh. On her way she paused, and looked wistfully at the former's well-kept potato-patch, but no stalwart form was working there, and heaving a sigh she went on with dragging footsteps.

Half-way done the lane she met Pat Maguire, who turned and walked by her in silence.

"Have ye lost yez tongue?" asked the girl pertly, at length.

"No, Biddy, but I've bought a taypot an' two china cups an' saucers widout a crack."

"Have ye, now?" with affected indifference. "What would ye be wantin' wid *two* cups, Pat Maguire?"

"Biddy, ye—" he began.

"Well, good-night to ye, shure I see me mother lookin' for me;" and before he was aware of her intention she had caught up to Mrs. M'Shane's small wrinkled form in front.

He had no choice save to turn and go home, dwelling on the hardness of his lady-love's heart.

A few days later, flushed and eager, he stood at the corner waiting to see her pass on her way to the well. No sooner had she appeared than he was by her side.

"Biddy!" he cried breathlessly, "Biddy, I've bought a *chest-o'-drawers*!"

The girl's great Irish eyes grew yet larger in amazement. "I don't believe ye," she cried disdainfully; "only the quality have chest-o'-drawers; what for would the loikes of ye be buyin' one?"

"For me woife," boldly.

"Arrah, thin, I did not know ye was married at all, at all."

"Biddy," reproachfully, "ye know my manin'."

Biddy tossed her head. "I don't," she declared untruthfully.

"Come an' look at it, thin," he pleaded, "just one little peep, now."

The girl hesitated, and then turned resolutely away. "No, it's nothin' to me," she insisted, "an' I must be goin', Pat Maguire."

He stood looking after her retreating form in bitter disappointment.

"It's no good at all, at all," he thought wretchedly. Then the gloom lifted again as a vision of his green enameled chest-of-drawers rose before his eyes. "Shure it's a foin *thing* entoirely," he muttered, "an' wait till I buy a *cow*."

The news that Pat Maguire had bought a "rale iligant" chest-of-drawers spread like wildfire through Limnagarry, and incredulous groups rushed up to the cottage to see the wonder with their own doubting eyes.

When they beheld it, one and all were speechless with envy and admiration, and went home scarcely believing the evidence of their own eyes. What would not every woman there have given to possess that wonderful piece of furniture for her very own? And to think that Biddy M'Shane might have it, and all the glories of the cottage, for the lifting up of her little finger!

"Shure 'tis a proud woman I am this day!" said Mrs. M'Shane, with a gasp.

Biddy was not as indifferent as she pretended, to the event of the year, and she hoped Pat would ask her again to view his purchase. When he did so she decided to give in gracefully after a decent show of resistance; however, as Pat, much to her bitter mortification, did nothing of the kind, keeping instead strictly out of her way, and even leaving her to learn from others that he had added a cow to the establishment, such condescension was not asked from her.

By this time she had forgotten all about the fickle Harry-

Bagh and was thoroughly in love with the stalwart young farmer—for so her mother insisted on speaking of him since the arrival of the cow.

The cow calved, and there was a large litter of pigs, but still Pat went on his way regardless of Biddy's wistful, watching eyes, and one day when she heard he had added a small wooden dresser, with dishes, and plates, and three jugs to place upon it, she felt she could bear his strange conduct no longer, and lingered in Blackberry Lane at twilight time, waiting to see him pass.

He paused as he came along, and looked at her eagerly, then made as if he would pass on unheeding, but the girl's entreating face, raised to his, weakened his resolution. He stopped and grew suddenly very shy and tongue-tied, standing there big and awkward, his heart full of the love he could not find words to express.

The golden light was just resting on the purple of the mountains; a soft haze of crimson lay behind them, cutting a fleecy cloud into flecks. The purple mountains, the gold, and the crimson, and all the glories of the setting sun were reflected in the azure waters. The bees hummed lazily down the lane, their drowsy buzzing a lullaby; butterflies twinkled from flower to flower, fluttering up and down like tiny gorgeous blossoms, and the smell of earth and peat, and all the summer of Nature, came sweet and strong to the young couple standing side by side.

"It's a stranger ye are now entoirely," said the girl at last, coyly.

Still Pat made no remark.

"How is the chest-o'-drawers?" asked Biddy, looking down.

His face brightened. "Ye should just see it," he cried enthusiastically. "Shure it's the loight of the cottage, an' the iligant side-board, an' plates, an' dishes an' jugs an' all! Kate Giligan came in yesterday, an' she said 'twould hould all a body's clothes" (he was referring to the chest-of-drawers), "an' lave room for tay an' sugar besides, an' she tried the rockin' chair an' said it was the most comfortable she'd ever seen."

Biddy looked at him with jealous, blazing eyes. "I wonder it didn't break wid the weight of the cratur—a great ugly elephant!"

"It's as strong as nivir was; shure 'twould hould me *an'* another."

He looked at her shyly.

"An' *her* Sunday clothes in my—your chest-o'-drawers! As if a great ugly colleen like Kate wanted clothes at all."

"Why, Biddy!" exclaimed Pat, mildly shocked, "ye wouldn't have a dacent body goin' about—"

"I'm not sure that she is a dacent body," retorted Biddy, tossing her head.

"For shame—"

"Well, thin," hotly, "is it dacent ye call it, to go to a bhoy's cottage an' thry his things, an' his rockin'-chair, an'—an'—?" She broke off with a stifled sob.

The idea of that hateful thing trying to rob her of Pat's affection, and—his furniture! She sobbed wildly at the mere thought of it.

Pat stood opposite trying to look into her eyes. "Why, Biddy, me jewel, what is it?" he asked tenderly, pulling her hands down from her face; "tell me now, darlint."

"I think it is a pity the chest-o'-drawers, an' the iligant side-board, an' the rockin'-chair, an' the jugs an' the dishes should—go out of the family," she whispered, blushing.

Pat put his arms around her without more ado, and drew her wet face against his own radiant one. "Is it yezsilt that will be wantin' of thim, thin, darlint?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes," cried the girl, her arms stealing round her lover's neck. "I do want that chest-o'-drawers mortal bad, but—I want ye more, Pat—darlint."





SPLIT Infinitive: The Professor's Love Story, by Mary F. Leonard*



"I MUST deplore——" began Professor Wentworth, removing his glasses.

"You have no idea how funny you look without them," interpolated his companion; whereupon he hastily replaced them, for nothing could have been farther from his wish at the moment than to appear funny. However, as he hooked them over his ears he reflected that Miss Sherman probably meant odd. He had noted with disapproval her careless manner of speech.

"You began to say something, Professor; I did not intend to interrupt," Miss Sherman added after a considerable pause, as she shifted her fluffy white parasol from one shoulder to the other.

"I beg your pardon, I am very absent-minded,—I do not recall——" he hesitated, wondering how long it had been since he last spoke.

"I'll excuse you upon one condition. You must tell me what you were thinking about; you looked as solemn as an owl."

The Professor blushed like a girl under the scrutiny of those mischievous blue eyes, in whose sight he felt he must appear a sort of lightning-change artist. "It was your use of the word funny. I was reflecting that you perhaps meant odd," he replied.

"I have noticed that you reflect too much," said Miss Sherman severely. "It makes me feel as if I were being dissected."

This was so like his own sensation the Professor was surprised. "I am far from presuming to criticize," he said; "you remember you insisted."

* Written for Short Stories.

Miss Sherman again shifted her becoming background and gazed out upon the lake. "How did you like 'Across the Storm'?" she asked, "I believe that is what we were discussing."

"I have to confess that a story of that kind is not in my line, yet I do not deny its merits,—a certain sprightliness, and some not unworthy characterization—but as regards style one must deplore the colloquialisms, and among other things, the frequent use of the split infinitive."

The sun had gone under a cloud, and Miss Sherman closed her parasol and clasped her hands around her knees. An unconventional attitude, but not without its charm when assumed by a graceful girl.

"It may be true, but for all that it is a delightful love story. It is quite clear to me, Professor, that you have never been in love;" she looked at him archly over her shoulder.

"I must beg to know upon what you found that conclusion," he answered, moving nearer.

"On this same habit of reflection. Now all you find in this story is split infinitives. At most it is to you an ungrammatical romance."

"And you——? I am to draw the inference——"

She laughed. "No, it is not necessary you should draw any."

It would be unjust to Miss Sherman's penetration to suppose she did not know what was coming when some minutes later Professor Wentworth, in language as clear and concise as he was master of, made her an offer of marriage, but she was surprised at herself that she did not find it more amusing. She upon whose word a multi-millionaire and a novelist of wide fame, not to mention certain lesser lights, were at this moment hanging in eager suspense.

The Professor might be stilted, but he was earnest and manly, and she felt a strange reluctance to wound him. "It wouldn't do at all," she told him. "We have been very good friends this summer, and you have perhaps found me entertaining; but after a while that would wear off. You would begin to—to see nothing but the split infinitives. I should shock you in various ways, and you would bore me, and we'd both be miserable. I am dreadfully sorry, but—"

He accepted her decision quietly, but she remembered long afterwards how white he looked, and also how fine were

the lines of his profile as he gazed with unseeing eyes at the expanse of cool, green water. Was it her fault? Had she encouraged him? Never before had her conscience trouble her thus. On the coaching party that evening she found her escort inexpressibly tiresome, and yet Charlie Townsend was considered a particularly bright fellow.

Professor Wentworth was delivering a course of lectures on Philology at the Summer School across the lake from the home of his college friend Arthur Sherman. Mr. Sherman's pretty wife and no less attractive sister made their cottage the centre of social life on the lakeside, and in accepting their cordial invitations the Professor had found himself in an unwonted atmosphere of careless gayety.

"No flirting with the Professor, Carolyn," Mr. Sherman had said, laughing, never dreaming that the rather silent, bookish man, a dozen years her senior, would be attracted by his gay young sister. But so it was, and much of the time he had planned to spend on his new book was spent instead somewhere in Carolyn's vicinity.

Several days after the episode by the lake, Mr. Sherman one afternoon came upon his sister ensconced in a large wicker chair on the porch, some salts in her hand, and a disconsolate expression of countenance.

"By the way, Carolyn, Wentworth asked me to say good-bye for him. His lectures are over and he leaves to-night. He had intended to call this afternoon, but I told him Helen and I were going to Jamestown, and that you were not well."

"That was very tiresome of you when I wanted particularly to see him," was her pettish reply.

"I fear Carolyn is in for nervous prostration," her brother remarked to his wife as they drove away.

Something did seem to go wrong. The millionaire who appeared at this inopportune moment was dismissed with scant courtesy, and then, left to herself, Carolyn began to cry silently. It was thus the Professor found her.

"My dear Miss Sherman," he exclaimed, "I hope nothing is the matter."

"Oh, nothing; I was only feeling tired and bored," she replied, hastily drying her eyes. "I have a tiresome headache."

"Then I fear I shall not help matters, but there is something I'd really like to say to you if it would not bore you too much."

"It is only myself that bores me," Carolyn replied, encouragingly.

"Well, I have just discovered that I must be something of a bore;" the Professor spoke, cheerfully: "I have been thinking over what you said to me, and I see I have grown into the habit of laying too much emphasis on corrections of form. As you expressed it, where others found a charming story I found only some grammatical inaccuracies. It is alas! the sin of the specialist, but I want to thank you for opening my eyes. I hope you will believe how I value your friendship—"

"Oh, don't!" cried Carolyn, putting her handkerchief to her eyes again.

"Is anything wrong? I don't want to distress you——" the Professor felt greatly embarrassed. "It is impossible for me to—to—adequately express my—"

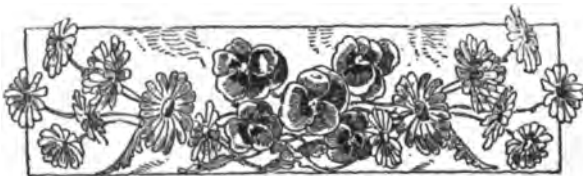
Carolyn sat suddenly erect. "Do you know what you have done?" she cried. "You have split an infinitive!"

He looked at her in astonishment, then said, recklessly, "Well, I don't care!"

"But *I* care, for it alters the case!"

For a second Professor Wentworth's grammatical mind was bewildered, but he was not dull, and in the flushed, tearful, smiling face he read that which thrilled him as no masterpiece of language had power to do. He bent over her. "My darling, I came back because I couldn't stay away, and now I begin to believe you wanted me," he said.

"I should never have acknowledged it if you had not split that infinitive," was her mischievous reply. "That showed me you *really* cared."





His Great Work: A Story of Incompatibility, by Henry de Forge. Translated from the French by Lawrence B. Fletcher*



“**P**OOOR boy! I am afraid your great work will never be written.” Marthe spoke jestingly, but there was something in the tone and the words that made Pierre wince and bend his head lower over his manuscript.

It was probably the twentieth time that his wife had made this unpleasant remark, and the worst of it was that Pierre had to admit to himself that her words were amply justified by the facts.

Yes, he was incapable of producing anything really worth while and must content himself with laboriously grinding out hack work at so much—or so little—a line.

Years ago, when he had timidly published his first novel—at his own expense—he had been happy for a season in the glamour of his hopes and illusions. Then his friends had confidence in his talent. Now his mother and sister and a few others still read his work with the indulgence of affection, and that was all. But what really opened his eyes to the truth was his wife's bitter contempt and cutting sarcasm.

A hundred times he had thought he felt the spur of inspiration and had set to work with enthusiasm on the novel or play that was to make him famous, and as often he had torn up his few finished pages in anger and said to himself that he was becoming duller every day and would better give up writing altogether. He made no reply to Marthe's taunts but suffered in silence, recalling the brief rapture of their engagement and honeymoon.

He felt guilty. He had failed to keep an implied promise.

Three years ago, in return for the great gift of Marthe's

*Translated for Short Stories.

love, her youth and beauty, he had vowed to her his talent, his dreams, his hopes of fame and fortune.

As for her, her illusions had long been shattered and she saw herself condemned for life to a commonplace existence by the side of a commonplace husband.

Once, when her disappointment and discontent had come to unmistakable expression, he ventured to say:

"Well, my dear, we shall have to find our happiness in our mutual love."

But Marthe's answer was a ringing laugh that froze the poor man's heart.

"People don't live on love, Pierre," she said, coldly. "Not in real life, though they may in the novels you write—I mean the novels you dream of writing."

Then something in Pierre's heart snapped, but he replied, simply:

"You feel the need of amusement, Marthe. Very well, you shall have it." This was the end of intimacy and confidence between them, of the long evening chats in the firelight and the thousand delightful nothings that make up the sum of happy married life.

Marthe loved the world and its pleasures, and Pierre's journalistic connections made it easy for him to secure admission to a gay and brilliant society. Besides, he took her frequently to theaters and the opera. In spring they attended all the races and exhibitions, and in summer went to a fashionable seashore resort. The earnings of Pierre's pen did not suffice for so expensive a life and he often had to dip into his wife's private purse. To these loans, as they were charitably called, Marthe never objected.

"I cannot refuse so polite and attentive a husband," she would say, with a smile.

Her smiles were rare nowadays, carefully doled out—at least, to her husband—and he accepted each one gratefully, like an alms, and treasured it.

Everywhere she was fêted, admired, flattered. She was very pretty and knew how to make the most of her natural advantages, and she was visibly proud and happy over her success.

Strangers who saw the new beauty inquired who she was and were informed that she was the wife of Pierre Dubrenil, the penny-a-liner, the journalist without ability or ambition

who was content to remain in obscurity and indifferent to his wife's triumphs—and reputation.

Soon people of importance interested themselves in her. Her name began to appear in social gazettes and presently a very elegant sportsman who was also a count—a real count—did her the honor to make a formal declaration of his devotion.

She thought this very amusing and told her husband about it.

"Don't be alarmed," she said. "You know that I am an honest woman, but I must have some amusement and, really, I find this count and his compliments quite entertaining."

Whereupon Pierre Dubrenil's dull suffering assumed a more acute form. The thought of this titled ass braying his equivocal compliments into Marthe's ears almost choked him. Often when he met the fellow in society he was tempted to fall upon him and throttle him, or at least knock him down, but prudence restrained him, for he knew that the count was a person of much influence and must be handled with gloves.

The count deigned to interest himself in Pierre and patronized him.

"Write a play, write a play, my young friend," he said. "I will recommend it and see that it is produced. Talent? The devil! A writer with such a wife has talent enough."

Marthe sang the same song in a different key.

"Oh, Pierre!" she said. "Why *can't* you write a play that will make a sensation? A strong, realistic, psychological thing—a problem play? Surely you can find material enough."

One summer night at the seashore, while Marthe, weary with much dancing, was sleeping soundly, Pierre sat brooding at his desk. The sum and substance of his reflections, as usual, was that Marthe's former love for him had evaporated into thin air and that his life was a wreck.

"Pshaw! Why go over it all again?" he said, finally. "But I can't sleep, so I may as well try to write."

And he did write. Not having any definite purpose, he allowed his pen to transcribe the thoughts that had been tormenting him. So what he wrote was dreary enough, a tissue of remembered joys and present sorrows. Then characters began to grow and take shape under his pen—first himself, clearly recognizable, then Marthe, and finally the count,

his contemptible but hated rival. And so he worked all night on this drama of real life and real emotions.

"What! Up so early?" Marthe exclaimed as she awoke at dawn. "What in the world are you working at so hard?"

"Oh, nothing," he said, coldly. "Nothing of any account, at least. How could it be?"

Every night after this, when Marthe was asleep, he rose silently, stole to his desk like a thief in the night and worked diligently and enthusiastically at his task. And this time he felt sure that the task would be accomplished and that the result would be good.

In due time they returned to Paris, Pierre with regret, but Marthe with delight, for had not the count, her faithful adorer, promised her a series of entertainments to which *tout Paris* should come to do her homage?

"We will launch your husband on the sea of fame," he said in his most patronizing manner.

"Do set to work, Pierre," said Marthe to her husband. "Don't throw away such a splendid opportunity. The count has great influence and his recommendation will be invaluable."

Pierre made no reply. He seemed to have become indifferent to everything and scarcely to notice what was passing around him. One day, however, as he sat facing his wife at their dismal dinner table, he surprised her by saying:

"By the way, a play of mine is to be produced at the Gymnase next week."

"Of yours? Why, Pierre! And you never told me a word about it!"

"Why should I? I have never had luck enough with my stuff to care to talk about it, even to you."

This first step toward success was really very gratifying to Marthe. She was not malicious or vindictive. Besides, the thought of the *première* of her husband's play, of what the critics would say of it, above all, the thought of herself, exquisitely gowned, the cynosure of a fashionable audience, was a new pleasure and suggested vague but delightful possibilities. She kissed her husband on both cheeks.

"Are you glad, Marthe? I have been working, you see, working hard."

"Yes, dear boy. I am very glad." Pierre smiled wearily.

"Am I, I wonder?" he said. "Ah, if it were not too late!"

The approach of the fateful evening filled Marthe with joyous excitement. The newspapers had given a good deal of space to the forthcoming *début* of the young playwright, and it was rumored that the piece was of uncommon strength and excellence.

"What is it about, you man of mystery?" Marthe asked her husband.

"Oh, you will see. It is a lively sort of thing and will make all the women laugh."

But it turned out not to be a farce nor even a comedy. On the contrary, it was a serious drama which dealt with emotions capable of causing the keenest suffering of which the human heart is susceptible.

It waked up the jaded public and stirred it to enthusiasm. Its success was immense, triumphal, without precedent.

It stood revealed as a masterpiece which was to have a run of five hundred nights and give its author a place among dramatists of the first rank.

Marthe, prettier than ever in a most becoming mauve costume, sat in a proscenium box with a few friends, including her incorrigible count.

The first words of the play gave her a little shock of surprise.

Why, this was an old story to her! It seemed like a faithful transcript of the memories of her bridehood, of her vanished happiness.

She clapped her little hands together until she nearly ruined her dainty gloves, happy and proud to hear such pretty sentiments, to see so lifelike a reproduction of her own happiness, and she smiled gratefully on her husband who lurked behind a curtain to escape the curiosity and the bravos of the audience.

If the first act was idyllic, the second was full of action. Then the storm burst and it added to Marthe's amazement, for it recalled vividly the first storms of her matrimonial voyage.

Evidently Pierre had put his own story upon the stage. This was clever and interesting, but—what would the outcome be? Marthe had long been so estranged from her husband, so indifferent to his thoughts and feelings, that she was totally unable to forecast his development of the theme.

The third act was a cold, pitiless, masterly analysis of the torture of the husband vacillating between forced resignation

and unavailing love and of the character of the wife, frivolous, careless and cynical.

Marthe listened and her heart stood still. Every word was a stab. Was it possible that Pierre had suffered like this—and through her? For now there could be no doubt. It was his life and hers that she had seen enacted.

Yet he had never uttered a word of complaint!

But oh! how terrible a revenge he had taken! How cruel a punishment was this mirroring of their lives upon the stage!

This was she, then—this actress whose business it seemed to be to twist the knife in the wound. And that was Pierre, grave, generous, honest, smiling in company and weeping in solitude.

Amid the acclamations the voice of the count (to whom, of course, all this was *caviare*) was loudest.

"Bravo! Bravissimo!" he shouted, then turning to Marthe, he added: "My dear friend, that husband of yours is a bright lad, a wonderfully bright lad. We shall be able to make something of him."

But Marthe, who was very pale and felt as if she were suffocating, made no reply.

The count offered his arm, but she exclaimed: "My husband! Where is my husband?"

Pierre conducted her to the carriage, fighting his way through the cheering crowd and cutting short the congratulations of friends and fellow craftsmen.

She gave no sign of the awakening which she had just experienced until they reached home. Then, when they were in their own rooms and the door locked, she fell on her knees and embraced his.

"Forgive me! Oh, forgive me, Pierre!" she sobbed.





**Y Polly's Aid: A School-
Teacher's Story, by Eleanor B.
Porter. Illustrations by Marie
Latasa***



THE schoolroom was very quiet. The master sat at the desk, wearily leaning his head on his hand, his eyes fixed on a boyish scrawl decorating the blackboard across the room.

"This world is all a fleeting show for man's delusion given," he read with a mild wonder as to how Bobby Green chanced to express so pessimistic a doctrine.

The misquotation, as it stood, was certainly in sad accord

*Written for Short Stories.

with his own ideas, but that was no reason why the children should learn the truth thus early in life. He could remember a time in his own past existence when he had believed quite the opposite of this dreary sentiment, but that was before She came into his life—or rather it was before She went out of his life. Unconsciously he heaved a sigh, and equally unconsciously, Polly, on the front seat, echoed it.

Scott Fairfield, the new master of the district school at the Corners, had the name of being a "powerful hand for grammar and composition," but to-day he had outdone himself. After a lengthy and painstaking explanation of the word "biography" he had startled the children by requesting each one to write the biography of some friend or relative; and it was with many laborious sharpenings of pencils and much rattling of paper that the youthful writers had begun their task.

As closing time drew near, Polly's sigh was echoed in all directions, and the abstracted gaze and fiercely bitten pencils of the discouraged biographers plainly testified that more time was needed for their unaccustomed task; so it was with the assurance that they could complete their work in the morning, that Fairfield sent them home at four o'clock.

Polly Dean walked down the street in a brown study. She had listened faithfully to all the master said—that is, as faithfully as she could, when all the time Tommy Brown across the aisle was drawing on his slate those queer-looking pictures for her especial benefit—but now she was not quite sure that she knew what "biography" meant.

At the Deans' supper table that night, during a momentary lull in the conversation, came Polly's opportunity.

"Mamma, what's a biography?"

"Bless the child—what is she up to now!" exclaimed Mrs. Dean in gentle surprise.

"It's writing a whole lot of nice things about somebody—praising him way to the skies, when it isn't true at all!" snapped Aunt Madge, who had just been reading the eulogy of a man she cordially disliked.



"It's telling of everything a person *did* do, and a few things he didn't," declared brother Ned with a shrug of his shoulders.

"My dear, it's a full account of one's life which one would never recognize as one's own," said her father, as he pushed back his chair; and in the general laugh that followed, Polly slipped away.

The biographies were to be read on Friday afternoon. When the appointed time arrived, the youthful authors betrayed some excitement and nervousness as they rose one after another to offer their contributions. The master looked down very kindly at Polly's flushed cheeks and shining eyes, but he started slightly as she announced in a shrill treble—

"THE BIOGRAPHY OF MY AUNT MADGE.

"This beautiful lady was born, oh, I don't know how many years ago, but ever so many—much as twenty, maybe. She isn't dead, yet, so I don't know when she died. She is tall and slim, and has got a lot of shiny gold hair piled way up on top of her head, and she is the prettiest lady I ever saw. I love her very, very much. She is never cross, and never says 'Run away.' I don't know anybody else who don't say 'Run away' sometimes. But this beautiful lady is very sad. Sometimes when I look at her I want to cry, but I don't know why, so I don't. Once upon a time she had a lover. I know this because she has got his picture upstairs in her room. I don't think he is as pretty as she is, and I told her so one day. She looked awful funny, and took the picture away quick. He looks a little like my teacher, only my teacher has got whiskers, and he hasn't. This lovely lady has not been here very long, but I wish she would stay forever. That is all I know about her."

"POLLY ANN DEAN."

Scott Fairfield's face was white and his voice was very low and husky as he called on Tommy Brown for the next biography.

When Polly started for home that night, she found the master beside her.

"May I walk with you, dear?" he asked, with a wonderfully sweet smile.

Polly was raised at once to the seventh heaven of delight. She blushed and hung her head, but she looked sideways out of her eyes to see if Mary Ellen and Susie were watching—the master was not wont to be so gracious.

"Do you think your Aunt Madge is at home to-night?" questioned Fairfield again, with a strange diffidence.

Polly nodded.

"Perhaps you will take me to see her," he suggested, almost deferentially, and then he was strangely silent.

Polly trotted happily along, vainly trying to bring her short steps to the long strides of the preoccupied man at her side.



Marie L. L.

Now and then she stole an upward glance at his face, and once she found him smiling.

"It must be Madge," he was thinking. "It is just like her own proud self to make no sign. Pride? What was pride worth, anyhow! He was sure he would throw his to the winds. He would humble himself, too—way in the dust. Madge was worth it—the dear girl! Misunderstanding? Bah!—away with the whole thing! He had found her at last—Madge!"

His blood was coursing madly through his veins and he was tingling to his finger-tips when Polly opened the gate before a pretty white cottage; but he contrived to walk with proper sedateness behind his small guide, who was fairly quivering with the delightful importance of the occasion. He was pacing nervously up and down the parlor, however, when Polly disappeared in quest of Aunt Madge.

"Teacher wants you!" exclaimed the child as she burst unceremoniously into her aunt's room a minute later.

"Wants *me*!" queried the mystified young woman, with a fleeting memory of the dread import of those words in the long ago after some schoolgirl prank. "Me— did you say, dear? It must be your mother, Polly"—in sudden sternness—"is it possible you have been up to mischief?"

Polly shook her head with decision.

"No, not the littlest bit! He said he wanted my Aunt Madge," asserted the small girl, excitedly.

With a furtive glance into the mirror, and a hasty touch here and there, Aunt Madge allowed herself to be escorted to the parlor.

Scott Fairfield started quickly forward as the door opened, but his impassioned "Madge" died on his lips, and his outstretched hands dropped to his side. Polly was leading a small, dark-haired, bright-eyed woman up to him and saying—

"This is my Aunt Madge, Mr. Fairfield."

Every vestige of self-possession left the master of the village school, and he stumbled and blundered in hopeless confusion, while his face went from white to red, and red to white.

"I—er—oh—there is some mistake—er—I'm delighted, I'm sure—" then to Polly with wrathful recklessness—"Why, child, you said she was tall and—" he stopped short with a sudden realization of the vivid color that was staining scarlet the face of the pretty little woman at his side.

"Apparently my niece has been favoring you with my personal description—and the reality disappoints you," she began frigidly, but with the suggestion of a twinkle in her eyes—there was something wonderfully ludicrous in the picture of confusion before her.

The poor man opened his mouth to speak, but Polly came to his rescue.

"Papa said you wouldn't recognize it!" said she, gleefully.

"Recognize what?" questioned Aunt Madge, turning to Polly in surprise.

"Your biography, of course, and you said it was praising 'em way to the skies when it wasn't true, too!"

Aunt Madge colored and bit her lip, and the ghost of a smile flickered for an instant across the distressed face of the man; then he gathered all his scattered wits and made a mighty effort.



"I sincerely beg your pardon. The fault was all my own. I was led, by what this little maid said in her biography, to think that in her Aunt Madge I had discovered a long-lost friend. I only hope you will kindly excuse my awkward stupidity when you realize how great must have been my surprise as I saw, not my friend, but an entire stranger enter the room." Then he turned to Polly with a faint smile,

but a deep pain far down in his eyes. "I fear, my dear, that my meaning was not quite clear to you about the biography. I did not intend that you should imagine it all."

"I didn't!" asserted Polly, stoutly. "I was telling all the time about a beautiful lady that I love very dearly, and it's all true, every bit of a word. It's Miss Weston, over at Cousin Mabel's. I just wrote about her for Aunt Madge's biography—that's all," added Polly with a sob in her voice.

"She means Madge Weston who is visiting my brother's family across the street; the young lady has suddenly become Polly's idol," explained Aunt Madge hastily, marveling at the great light which transformed the face of the man before her, as the name passed her lips.

Five minutes later, he had mingled hasty adieus and apologies, and had turned quick steps toward the house across the way.

Aunt Madge, with a sympathetic little thrill for that other woman's coming joy, saw through the window the door of the opposite house open and close on Fairfield's stalwart form; then Polly was surprised with a spasmodic hug and a fervent kiss from her usually undemonstrative auntie.

The next morning Bobby Green's scrawl on the blackboard had disappeared, and in its place, in the master's bold handwriting, was:

Life, believe, is not a dream
So dark as sages say;
Oft a little morning rain
Foretells a pleasant day





N An Alpine Frontier: **The Story of a Chase, by Arthur** **H. Henderson***



HIGH above the giant mountains of Dauphiné, where range on range of unfrequented Alps rise athwart the eastern frontier of France, lies a lonely mountain tarn. The snows of summer scarcely seem to lighten its black waters. The sad winter shadows watch the snowdrifts softly deepening over its frozen surface. For long months at a time its solitude is undisturbed, its desolate shore untrodden. Pallid August moonlight glistens on the hard descending couloirs where no foot of man can ever pass. Autumn breezes sigh round the still unmelted icebergs floating sluggishly on its gloomy waters. Even in the height of summer long icicles hang from the frozen rocks. White mists are ever gathering in the névé-filled hollow above the great ice wall of the Pic Glacier and whirling fantastically upwards at the bidding of the cold mountain wind. Gaunt black splinters on the arête of the Pic du Minuit stand out against the leaden sky beyond. The sullen silence of the spot is seldom broken save by the dull boom of a distant avalanche or the sharper crack of a boulder rolling to destruction down a neighboring stone-shoot. Not even the boldest native cragsman, the most reckless chamois hunter of the district, but dreads to find himself in its grim vicinity as the twilight steals up the mountain side. A tragic memory lingers yet round its lonely side.

The story runs on both sides of the frontier. In the tiny French villages the last desperate stand, in the days that are past, of the small detachment of imperial troops against the invader is still spoken of with eager pride. Across the mountains among the Italian hamlets the old peasants will relate to a sympathetic listener the tale of their fathers' time.

*From The Cornhill Magazine.

More than eighty summers have come and gone since the fierce struggle on the wind-swept summit of the frozen Alpine pass. But in the local patois the tarn is known as "The Lake of the Dead" to this day.

And this is the reason.

Years ago when the Great Napoleon escaped from Elba for the last wild campaign that was to end in his utter ruin, he marched across the mountains of Dauphiné to Grenoble. Thence his call to the soldiers of his armies of the past radiated in all directions and penetrated to the remotest valleys. The little French garrison on the Italian frontier tore off their white Bourbon cockades and vowed enthusiastically to die for their old Emperor. As the armies of Europe mustered for the fray, instructions were sent to the detachment guarding the pass under the Pic du Minuit to defend it at all costs against invaders from the east. The young officer in command was engaged to be married to a beautiful girl who was living in a frontier village on the Italian side. A gathering thunderstorm was muttering restlessly among the mountains when Marie Davigno heard from the villagers that a surprise attack on the French post was impending. The girl never hesitated a minute. Alone and unaided she stole away up the steep hillside and breasted the slippery rocks on to the Pic Glacier. Already the foe was *en route*, for the pass and the longer easier way was impossible. Skirting treacherous crevasses and wading through deep snow plateaus, she struggled bravely upward to warn her loved one of the coming danger. The fact that her name has lived to this day is a proof of the wonder her daring evoked even among a mountain race. And she was just in time to warn—no more.

The French troops—barely two dozen in all—veterans who had soldiered under the imperial eagles from Austerlitz to Leipzig—crowded round the girl with rough devotion. Then, her story told, they took up their position with grim set faces that augured ill for the foe. The young lieutenant had barely time to kiss his betrothed and whisper a few words of love ere the first shots rang out on the lonely mountain side. In vain he begged her to leave them now her task was accomplished and while it was still possible. "*Jusqu'à la mort, et après*"—till death, and after—said the girl in quiet refusal. And the thunder rumbled stern approval from afar.

It is a sad little episode the record of which has been forgotten amid the turmoil of the great war. Marie Davigno fell dead at the second volley, and then the Frenchmen, out-flanked and outnumbered, fought it out fiercely to the last man. After all was over, such as were left of the victors flung the dead to rest for ever beneath the icy waters of the mountain tarn. The storms which leveled stately pine trees in the valleys, swept men and cattle from the pastures and flooded with furious torrents each neighboring dale and plain, seemed a fitting conclusion to the deed of blood. The evening of June 18 was long remembered in the Dauphiné valleys. And not in the district alone. For it was at the very moment that the storm burst—or so tradition says—that far away in another land the Imperial Guard had charged for the last time up the slope of Hougoumont, and the great Emperor was swept away amid the débris of his army from the field of Waterloo.

All this happened more than three-quarters of a century ago. Young children of the villagers who had sheltered survivors from the raging of the elements are now old men and very feeble. Children's children tell the tale first learned by pitying grandparents from wounded lips. Sometimes a bent, grizzled old native harps back on his memory's store. If so, he is sure to finish with a solemn injunction to his listener, to avoid the locality during certain days in June. "*Jusqu'à la mort, et après*" he will whisper significantly. "And, monsieur, it is not good to meet again with those who should be sleeping together beneath the waters of the lake. For it is even said by some—"

But here the legend generally ends with a significant shake of the head, for the peasant of the mountains, superstitious though he be, is apt to keep his real fears for his own people only. Above all does he conceal them from wandering English or German mountaineers. The former laughs at, the latter seriously investigates, all folk lore, and both processes are repugnant to the true child-like faith of the hills. Consequently the travelers' knowledge of the reason why the Lake of the Dead bears so ill-omened a name is as a rule derived from the three-lined paragraph in the pocket guide book. This simply states that "the tarn is reported to have been used as a burial place for the French soldiers slain in a

skirmish on the pass during the invasion of France in the wars of the Great Napoleon."

Such is the story—nothing more. Monsieur Jean Maître, of the Hotel du Pic du Minuit, perhaps will tell it you if he likes you, and if he is not too busy.

For in these days there is no nicer spot in fine weather in the whole Southwestern Alps than the Val du Minuit. Far from the crowded centers, it is known to but few Englishmen. These are mostly climbing men who visit it to tackle the difficult rock arête of the Pic du Minuit which gives the valley its name, or else who use the glacier pass under the mountain leading from Italy to France. But to the military guardians of the frontier it is very well known indeed. Picked soldiers from the Alpine battalions of Chasseurs-à-pied haunt the mountain paths in spring and maneuver unostentatiously along the border line as the summer advances. White-mustached generals—perchance a real divisional commander—may be encountered on tours of inspection. Workmanlike staff officers map the mountain positions and keen-eyed patrols wander over the glaciers. And if things happen as they sometimes do on a European frontier—for who can be certain where a purely imaginary boundary line lies in a fog, for instance?—why then the news has to filter far ere it reaches the pestilent newspapers, and methods exist for closing sources of information to the outside world where necessity compels. For European complications are to be avoided unless diplomacy desires them. And if governments cannot always control their agents, they can generally suppress the details of their deeds.

One afternoon in early summer, darkness was rapidly approaching and thick mists were rolling downwards in great white waves from the cold mountains overhead. The interminable séracs of the Minuit Glacier seemed to a certain English mountaineer and his two guides, who were cautiously picking their way through them, to loom a ghostly gray in the gathering twilight. The mighty shape of the Pic du Minuit was almost hidden from view, and the gaunt crags on its broken arête were fast disappearing in a veil of cloud. In fact, the weather was atrocious and had completely spoilt John Forrester's attack on the Pic. This was the more annoying inasmuch as it was probably the result of attempting to mountaineer so early in the season. He had

been assured by a man at home, who ought to have known better, that the Dauphiné peaks were easiest before the suns of the later summer had melted the snows that clung to the gullies. And he had been fool enough to believe it.

The three men were all rather weary. The snow was in bad condition and the wind was bitterly cold. There was not much sensation in the Englishmen's feet or fingers by the time they had scrambled off the glacier onto the rocks of the moraine. These at first proved wet and slippery with a thin glazing of ice, and all the energies of the party were needed to avoid the surrounding pitfalls in the shape of unexpected holes and insecurely perched bowlders. But at last they were fairly on the grass-grown slopes of the hillside, descending rapidly toward the little mountain inn where dinner and dry clothes awaited them.

Here in the doorway a girl was watching impatiently for their return. Her slight active figure was dressed in a serviceable costume of some gray material. Without being exactly beautiful her regular features and large black eyes would anywhere have attracted attention. Her rather pale face was surmounted by a wondrous mass of dark wavy hair, and her every movement displayed that quick gracefulness sometimes inherited but rarely acquired. She came forward impulsively to meet the returning mountaineers with frank unceremony.

"Have you been on the Pass?" she asked Forrester, eagerly, speaking his language with a quaint foreign accent.

"No," answered the Englishman, raising his rather ragged shooting cap. "We have been on the Pic Arête."

"On the Pic," she repeated quickly, "and you have seen no one on the way?"

"Not a soul," said Forrester promptly. "And from the state of the weather up there I don't wonder at it."

A disappointed look crept into the girl's dark eyes, and she half opened her lips to speak. But she checked herself abruptly, muttered some words of thanks, and turned away. Not until the rough mountain dinner had begun did Forrester learn the reason of her questions. Her brother should have long since returned from his day's work in the mountains, and every hour that passed made his absence the more inexplicable.

Forrester's acquaintance with brother and sister extended

over a four days' stay in the valley. His knowledge of the Ruvignys was derived from occasional conversation at meal times. By this means he had learnt that the father had been connected with the French Embassy at Washington, where he had married an American lady, which accounted for the daughter's independent ways—so foreign to French ideas—and also for the English speech. The son was a captain in the 11th Alpine Battalion of Chasseurs-à-pied, and was now engaged in important secret survey work on the frontier. During the summer Denise Ruvigny had come to live with her brother, enjoying the free open-air life immensely and acquiring a considerable knowledge of climbing. This particular day, however, the weather had been so bad that she had not accompanied him as usual among the mountains.

All that dismal dinner time the wind moaned restlessly outside and the hail drops splashed fitfully against the window panes. The girl was growing visibly more and more restless and anxious. As soon as the meal had ended she left the room. Forrester was smoking a cigarette and idly turning over the leaves of the visitors' book when the landlord of the inn came up to him with a perplexed look on his round red face.

The mademoiselle was much concerned as to the absence of Monsieur le Capitaine her brother. For his part—though of a truth it was evil weather in which to be benighted on the mountains—mine host intimated he had but little fear as to the safety of that brave officer. Doubtless he had been forced to seek shelter in one of the neighboring climbing huts—at the worst an experienced soldier such as he was would be sure to find some nook in the rocks in which to shelter till daylight dawned. But the mademoiselle insisted on setting out as soon as morning broke to search for him, if he had not in the meantime arrived. And herein lay the difficulty. She could not go alone, and there were no guides in the place except those with monsieur the Englishman. Did he intend to avail himself of them both on the morrow?

Forrester pondered a moment. He should have no objection at all to guiding her himself if necessary. The more he considered it the more he decided he should rather like the task. In fact it became quite clear it was a good idea. But would the girl accept his assistance?

On this point the landlord soon reassured him. The stout

Frenchman was only too pleased, and waddled away in search of his lady visitor. In a very short space of time Forrester's offer had been accepted with grateful promptness and he was watching the charming play of expression in the dark eyes whose owner was trustfully confiding to him all her anxieties. And Denise Ruvigny could have made no better choice of a helper. The young English engineer was a first-rate climber, a man of cool head and infinite resource, and above all a gentleman. Long after she had said good-night and left him he sat smoking thoughtfully by the embers of the dying wood fire. His thoughts turned persistently to the girl who was to be his companion on the morrow. The soft tones of her voice, the smiles that had once or twice hovered round her small mouth, the appeal for assistance, interested him strangely. So he mused in pleasing laziness till a sleepy guide, coming to ask at what time his monsieur intended to start in the morning, broke up his reverie and drove him away to bed.

In the cold and dark of the early morning Forrester was roused with difficulty by an agitated French "boots" and informed there was no news of the missing man. Out of doors the weather showed no signs of improvement. Indeed it was so bad that the two guides protested energetically at leaving the shelter of the valley for the storm and labor of the glacier regions above. But their employer was unreasonably resolute in a manner quite new to those stalwart experts, and they were compelled to start, despite vehement protestation that it was folly or worse to attempt their errand on such a morning. Denise Ruvigny had looked so bitterly disappointed at the idea of giving up the search that Forrester was determined to set forth on it if possible. And since her brother's survey work on the previous day would have taken him in the neighborhood of the Col du Pic du Minuit—the pass on whose summit lies the little Lake of the Dead—it was proposed to make for that point first.

The little party as it left Monsieur Maître's inn was not a very lively one. The girl was full of foreboding at her brother's absence and shyly conscious that she was with strange companions. The guides were openly incredulous as to the possibility of finding anyone or anything in the mists and rain that enveloped the hills. Englishmen are always apt to be taciturn at 6 a.m., and John Forrester was no exception

to the rule, though undoubtedly on this occasion he was the most cheerful of the four. There was a spice of adventure in the whole proceeding that charmed him. It is of course the bounden duty of a member of the Alpine Club to help all mountaineers in distress; that he remembered to have vaguely gathered from its publications. On the question whether such a duty extended to French surveying officers he could remember no precedent. But no such incentive was necessary when Denise Ruvigny's dark eyes were looking distressfully into his, and her soft voice was urging him onward.

"I fear I am indeed a great trouble to you, monsieur," she said once with slightly heightened color as Forrester adjusted the rope round her on reaching the lower Minuit Glacier. "But for me you would doubtless be resting yourself below at Monsieur Maître's breakfast table. Is it not so?"

And her small head nodded, half archly, in the direction of that worthy's distant abode in the valley below.

"Much more likely to have been sound asleep in bed," asserted the Englishman with a cheerful laugh, "instead of taking a morning walk in the mountains and enjoying myself. See, the mists show signs of clearing. We may have a fine day yet. But the snow on this glacier is in a rotten bad condition, so we must be careful," he added. And he proceeded to impress on Gaspard, the leading guide, not to go too fast.

As the party tracked cautiously up the glacier it dawned on him that the girl roped between the guide and himself was no novice at such work. She trod firmly and with confidence in the steps of the leader, and when he stopped to sound for hidden crevasses she watched his doings with the accustomed interest of the mountaineer familiar with such obstacles. Once, however, there was an awkward slip. It proved necessary to cut up a steep little ice slope swept clean of snow. Gaspard was in an ill humor and used his ice-axe carelessly. The steps cut in the ice were bad and the girl suddenly stumbled. In a moment, with a little cry of alarm, she slid downward to the full length of her rope toward a nasty crevasse just below. But the jerk of her light weight found the two men roped on each side of her steady as rocks. Pierre the other guide, the moment that it was seen that they were firm, cut down quickly across the ice to her assistance. In less than three minutes Forrester was brushing

the snow off her dress and angrily demanding of Gaspard what on earth he meant by scratching the ice with his axe instead of cutting his steps properly.

Denise, however, took it all much as a matter of course, and strove to soothe the angry Englishman.

"Ah! it was my fault, monsieur, do not blame the guide," she cried with a little gesture of appeal. "I was careless, for I thought of other things and not of my footsteps. And it was wrong of me truly!"

"Are you sure you are not hurt?" queried Forrester bluntly.

"Quite certain, monsieur," she replied with eager emphasis. "It was—how say you in English?—a good tumble, nothing more."

And her lips parted in a half-smile, which, however, faded away quickly.

"But oh! let us hasten on," she added impatiently. "We have yet to find my brother. Why do we wait here?"

No more was said. Again the little party got under way, with renewed vigor. Gaspard's ice steps for the rest of the morning were exemplary. And an hour later the missing man had been found with unexpected ease, but also under wholly unforeseen circumstances.

The searchers had quitted the glacier for the rocks which on the French side lead to the summit of the Col. These are steep and broken, and need care in climbing. The leader was fully occupied in choosing the easiest route upward, and all Forrester's thoughts were concentrated on helping the girl in front of him. Suddenly Pierre, in the rear, gave a startled shout. A few yards to their right a white handkerchief caught between two stones fluttered in the breeze.

Pierre's loud exclamation was followed by a faint cry for help from the same direction. A hasty scramble brought the others to the spot in no time. Under a great mass of overhanging rock was a low natural shelf where a man could shelter in bad weather. Here, protected in some degree from the rain and wind, a man was lying wounded and alone.

The girl flung herself down beside her brother with a little piteous cry. Forrester promptly dragged a flask from his pocket, and its contents brought back some color to the pale face and lips. The guides leant helplessly against the rock wall with staring eyes.

A moment later Pierre touched the Englishman's shoulder

and pointed awestruck to the ground. Gradually his meaning became clear. All round were the signs of a savage struggle. The drifted snow was trampled down and stained with blood. A broken surveying instrument lay at one end of the ledge of rock, and some spent revolver cartridges were scattered about the other. No ordinary accident had caused the disaster. What could it all mean?

It was soon to be clear enough, however. Revived by the cordial, the wounded officer dragged himself up into a sitting posture, and poured out a torrent of impetuous French sentences. The girl listened eagerly, and her face whitened at his tale. He pointed to the stalwart Englishman standing beside her, vainly endeavoring to understand the rapid foreign tongue. He was evidently urging on his sister some course of action she was unwilling to take. She expostulated; he implored. She hesitated and he gesticulated strenuously with his unwounded arm—the other hung limp and useless—toward the frontier. At last she turned reluctantly and looked John Forrester full in the face.

"My brother's story is a strange one, monsieur," she said slowly in English. "He bids me tell it you and ask you to help me yet again for the second time."

The Englishman nodded cheerfully. "All right," he said, smiling a little. "It is all in the day's work. What is to be done next?"

"We must try to catch the thief," was the unexpected answer.

Forrester's stare of astonishment showed the speaker that he was still quite ignorant of the situation. Rapidly she explained it with the same frank trustfulness she had shown the previous night.

Captain Ruvigny's work on the frontier was in connection with secret plans for the mobilization of troops in the event of war. A most important part of his duty was to trace the position of certain fresh fortifications which it was proposed to make. The sketches of these new forts with their positions, ranges and armaments were in fact on the point of completion. In a few days the general in command of that portion of the eastern frontier was to reach the Val du Minuit, and to him the plans were to be submitted for transmission to Paris. It was of the utmost importance that no details of their construction should become known across the frontier. In order

not to awaken suspicion the designers worked singly and unostentatiously. But now it was clear that part of the secret was known to someone on the other side.

Overtaken by the bad weather on the previous evening—so the girl explained—Louis Ruvigny sought out this shelf of rock which he had used once before on a similar occasion. Here he passed a fairly comfortable night. In the early morning he awoke with a start from an uneasy slumber to find a stranger bending over him in the act of rifling his pockets.

"An Italian spy!" cried the wounded officer in fierce parenthesis.

"In a moment Louis grappled with the newcomer, monsieur, and there was a great fight," Denise continued, "but the other was strong and eager, and my brother was numbed with the cold. How it all happened is hard to say. The spy crushed Louis back against the rocks, so that his arm is broken, as you see. From the pain he nearly faints. Then the paper is torn from him in triumph. With a mocking shout the thief bounds away up the mountain side to the pass Louis fires—again and again—with his pistol. But ah! in vain. Now but one course remains. My brother cannot go in pursuit, for he is hurt. We must do so instead."

"It will be impossible to overtake him," muttered Forrester as the narrator stopped breathless with indignation.

"Oh, no, monsieur!" urged the Frenchman eagerly. "He is certain to stop at the Pic Hut on the other side. He too is doubtless much fatigued. But you must depart at once with speed."

"We cannot leave you here," Forrester objected strongly. "It is absurd!"

Denise Ruvigny knitted her small dark eyebrows and spoke with a firm decision almost odd in so young a girl.

"One of the guides must remain with my brother, monsieur. They will return with slowness to the valley. You must pretend that you cross the pass for the pleasure of the mountaineering—is not that how you say it? Also you must affirm that I am of your party, and I will talk the English, thus, like an English lady. So shall we be able to follow over the frontier without suspicion."

"But how will you know the man when you see him?" demanded Forrester brusquely.

"From my brother's description," said the girl quietly. "It is in my head. I shall make no mistake."

"It is a tremendous grind right over the pass to the Pic Hut," the mountaineer still protested doubtfully. "Can you do it?"

"Yes," replied Denise simply. Then her voice dropped a little as she spoke.

"If you help me, monsieur."

The Englishman watched her for a moment in growing wonder—wonder that gave place to admiration at her pluck.

"My brother is ruined if the paper is not recovered," she added. "Its loss will never be forgiven in Paris, never! Will you go? I wait your answer, monsieur."

The other stood silent. It seemed a wild, mad idea to the Englishman unaccustomed to the amenities of a land frontier. To abandon a sorely wounded man—to chase an entirely unknown foreigner into his own country—to obtain forcible recovery of a compromising document—such was the task proposed to him. But he could think of no other plan. Moreover Denise Ruvigny had never looked so charming as when, with her large eyes regarding him gravely, she proposed this ridiculous scheme. And even while outwardly he hesitated, inwardly he knew he should do as she wished.

"I wait your answer, monsieur," repeated the girl with a slight tinge of surprise in her tone.

John Forrester gathered up the loose coil of Alpine rope.

"I will do my best," he said slowly. "But I do not think we shall succeed all the same."

"And I am sure we shall," cried Denise Ruvigny confidently.

"Come, monsieur, let us go."

And so the first pursuit began.

The route over the Col du Pic du Minuit is none of the easiest even in fine weather. Still, though it is rarely traversed now except by mountaineers bound for the Pic itself, it presents no insurmountable difficulties on the French side at least. But on the Italian side it is quite different. There is, it is true, a long roundabout way taking many hours, by which the descent is possible and by which it is generally accomplished. The direct route from the summit of the pass into the nearest Italian valley is exceedingly difficult and

trying. Owing to one of those strange glacial oscillations which are the puzzle of scientists, the ice of the Pic Glacier has so altered in formation since the beginning of the present century that even the wild daring that carried Marie Davigno up its slippery slopes in the old days would probably now fail to accomplish its task—at any rate unaided. Both routes—the long devious one and the short dangerous one—ultimately meet in Italian territory. Here on the rocky floor at the head of a lonely mountain valley the Italian Alpine Club has built a climbers' hut. The nearest village is some miles lower down the valley.

It was a gloomy afternoon. The daylight was already waning sullenly by the time that Forrester's party, descending by the usual route, at last struck the rough track which leads from among the moraine heaps of the Pic Glacier to this refuge hut known by the same name. Forrester himself was uncommonly glad when Pierre pointed out to him the insignificant little building in the distance. The mists that had clung so obstinately round them in the higher regions had rendered their progress, even by the easier descent, slow and difficult. And his girl companion, despite her pluck and endurance, was nearly worn out.

Not that Denise would admit it for a moment. But for the last hour or two she had tacitly allowed the leader to help her in places where she would have scorned his assistance earlier in the day. And the steadying grasp of her small white fingers on his arm, the natural way in which she turned to him for necessary directions, the feeling that he was responsible for her safety, brought a new sensation to the stalwart Englishman accustomed only to shift for himself or his guides.

Past fatigues were soon forgotten, however, when the hut came in sight. As they neared it a man became visible outside gazing earnestly in their direction. Soon they were close enough to distinguish his features. He was a tall, thin-faced individual with a hooked nose, shifty dark eyes, and stray locks of unkempt black hair escaping from beneath a rough mountaineer's cap. Next moment, as Denise Ruvigny sprang suddenly forward, the stranger as suddenly retreated into the hut and shut the door in their faces.

"Monsieur, that is the thief!" cried the girl excitedly. And she rushed impetuously past Forrester on the narrow path.

The latter was after her in an instant, and Pierre followed with a bound. The hut door was wrenched open roughly and the eager pursuers burst into the little room, only to recoil in overwhelming consternation.

The hut was full of Italian soldiers. As ill-luck would have it, a frontier patrol was in occupation for the night.

The surprise was complete. Fortunate it was that the Englishman's presence of mind rose at once to meet the unexpected danger. Concealing his chagrin he raised his cap in customary salutation and stolidly set about asserting the mountaineer's right to a share at all times in the refuge huts. He quietly unshipped the rucksack from his shoulders, unconcernedly cleared a place on the nearest bench for Denise, and proceeded to stow away rope and ice-axe in a convenient corner. With sharp admonition in his voice he ordered Pierre to unpack the provisions and boil some water as for the usual evening meal. Then he turned to look about him.

The hut was but dimly lighted, and tobacco smoke hung heavily in the air. The man they had seen outside the hut, and whom Denise had declared she recognized as the thief, sat on the straw sleeping bench staring fixedly at the newcomers. Five frontier guards under a sergeant crowded the little interior.

But these "Alpini," as they are called, by no means impressed him unfavorably. They had returned his greeting politely: one of them moved aside to give the girl a more comfortable seat, and another began to help Pierre resuscitate the low fire in the little iron stove. There was no suspicion or unfriendliness in their looks. On their part indeed they recognized at once from Forrester's dress and speech that he was unmistakably English. The curious islanders who loved to scramble about their mountains for pleasure were mad doubtless, but quite harmless and often amusingly good fellows. They were quite different from the hated French across the frontier. And Denise Ruvigny's drooping form, and face pale with weariness and disappointment, evidently excited sympathy.

Perhaps it was just as well that conversation proved impossible. The sergeant made several gallant attempts, but Forrester knew no Italian, and the girl stuck to her Anglo-American, nearly upsetting her companion's gravity by some of her naïve expressions. The Englishman passed his tobacco

pouch round, and its contents met with decided approval. There was much smiling and gesticulation, and also some headshaking, when it became clear, chiefly by signs, that the newcomers were from over the pass. And as Pierre professed a profound stupidity, their intercourse of necessity stopped.

Till suddenly the unexpected happened again. Forrester's movements, as he sorted out the best of their scanty store of provisions for his companion's supper, had carried him beside the hitherto silent stranger. The latter touched him on the shoulder and spoke in a low tone.

"I should like a word with you, monsieur," he said in excellent English. "And alone if you please."

Forrester was conscious of a distinctly disagreeable shock of surprise. But he strolled casually after the speaker outside the hut amid the wilderness of bowlders great and small that surrounded it on all sides. Pierre was preparing food within. The soldiers were lounging lazily on the benches. Darkness was gathering fast. No one was near.

"I scarcely think you crossed the Col du Pic du Minuit for pleasure in this weather," said the stranger sarcastically. "Perhaps there was another motive."

"Indeed!" was the laconic answer. "What was that?"

"One moment," said the other with a smooth wave of his hand. "But first—mademoiselle?"

"Yes."

"Or madame, should I say?"

Forrester stared impassively at the blinking eyes peering into his without answering, till their owner seemed to think it wise not to press the point.

"Speaks curious English, it appears."

"Ah!" observed Forrester blandly. "American, you see."

"No, French!" cried the other with a scowl.

"Look here, monsieur," he continued harshly. "I can guess the errand on which you have come. But the game is in my hands now. Yonder girl has a brother in the army of France. You start—you know it is true. What then, shall hinder me from denouncing her to the patrol as a spy?"

Forrester turned on the speaker savagely. But the latter went on unheeding.

"It is no use to threaten me, monsieur. Here on Italian soil I am safe. It is you and the mademoiselle—or madame—to whom the danger comes. Do you follow me?"

"Well?" asked the Englishman with a scornful assurance he scarcely felt. "What do you propose to do?"

"This," said the other promptly. "Let us bargain. It is true—I confess it—that I took from that pig of a Frenchman the paper with the plan of the new forts. To me it is worth much money, for I shall sell it in Rome to the Minister of War. But I do not reveal it to these frontier fools here. If they knew of it they would perhaps take it from me and I should then lose all. Now I have been in England and know the English gentleman—"

"Really!" observed the representative of that class in parenthesis. "You surprise me."

The other scowled fiercely at the interruption, but went on rapidly.

"You must pledge me your word of honor, Englishman, not to attempt to recover from me the paper which I have taken. To-morrow I go down the valley and I take the train to Turin. You will recross the frontier or do whatever you will except deprive me of that which I have won. Are you agreed?"

"And your side of the bargain is—"

"That I keep my silence. Otherwise the girl shall be arrested as a spy this night—instantly. And, monsieur, let me tell you in this country scant consideration is shown to spies, male or female."

"My passport, however," began Forrester thoughtfully.

"Contains no mention of a lady," cried the other with a sneer. "Not even a sister or a wife."

The Englishman's eyes flashed ominously, but the other kept his ground with defiant ease. For a full minute the two men stood looking at each other steadily face to face. The very darkness seemed to deepen round them. A stream murmured dully in the distance. The night wind moaned dismally among the rocks.

But the die was cast. Forrester saw clearly that he had no choice. Denise Ruvigny's safety came first. He spoke at last with grim decision.

"I agree to your proposal. I will make no effort personally to recover possession of the paper from you. You on your part will keep silence before these men about her."

"Monsieur is wise," cried the other triumphantly. "It is, as you say in English, a bargain. You indeed I might have

cause to fear; the woman and the guide—bah! they are helpless—fools!”

And the speaker turned with a little exulting bow toward the hut.

A sudden impulse moved the Englishman to call after him. With some curiosity Forrester asked his last question that night.

“So you trust an Englishman’s word absolutely, then?” he said.

“Between two *gentlemen*,” retorted the spy with a lower bow and an evil mocking face, “such is quite sufficient. Adieu, monsieur.”

And Forrester’s muttered rejoinder was not a blessing.

Indeed he grew quite sulky as he retraced his steps, for when was a fellow ever placed in such an abominable position? On the one hand he had pledged himself to help Denise, on the other he was condemned to absolute inaction. And sulky he remained even after he had helped the girl to roll herself up, fully dressed as she was, in the best blankets the hut provided and settle down to sleep in the cleanest straw with his rucksack as a pillow. He could only ponder over his troubles in silent perplexity and curse the world at large.

Matters seemed worse in the morning. For a time a dense mist enveloped everything, and while it hindered anyone leaving the hut it did not prevent the arrival of another party of a dozen soldiers from the valley who came crowding noisily inside under a stout, dirty, little lieutenant. Forrester glowered at them darkly. He made no attempt to explain the situation to the girl who on her part watched him with a half-puzzled expression he could not understand. The spy rolled numberless cigarettes, smoked them gracefully the while, and looked amused. The whole affair was simply maddening.

A puff of cold wind from the icefields above rolled the white fog aside as a curtain is drawn back across a window. Peak and pass, valley and glacier, stood revealed in the gray light of a sunless morn. A bustle of preparation promptly pervaded the hut. In an incredibly short time all the troops with one exception had taken their arms and filed away toward the Col du Pic du Minuit. The man left behind was chopping up firewood outside the hut. The spy was on the point of departure also. But he was two minutes too late.

What followed was the work of a minute. Denise Ruvigny

and Pierre the guide did it together without a word. The girl suddenly flung a heavy Alpine blanket over the stranger's lace as he stooped to fasten a bootlace. Without a moment's hesitation the young Frenchman brought the heavy iron cooking pot, which he had been making a pretense of cleaning, down on the struggling head muffled under the blanket.

It fell with a mighty crash. The spy was stretched senseless on the ground with a dull thud. Flinging himself down beside him Pierre coolly tore open his coat and handed the contents of the pockets to the girl for examination. Her face was white with excitement, but the small hands never faltered. The paper so eagerly sought was soon found. Pursuit had indeed ended in capture. Escape remained.

Yet the first thought on Forrester's part was not of safety. He had stood inactive at the supreme moment. Painfully he began to explain his enforced inaction.

The girl checked him with a smile.

"Monsieur, last night I did hear all you would tell me now."

"You heard!" cried Forrester in wonder. "How?"

"The big boulder," confessed Denise, half ashamed, "hid me quite easily. You never saw me, but I heard you well. So truly I understand it all. And now, monsieur, how do we return to France?"

The latter remark opened a serious question. It was indeed no time to talk of anything else. Pierre too deemed this the best moment to volunteer the cheering information, gathered from the soldiers, that the troops now on the hillside between themselves and the Col were but an advance guard. Others were on the way up from the valley, and were to be expected shortly at the hut. The little party was between two fires. What was to be done?

The hut door was closed, and Pierre leant against it stubbornly. The girl concealed the paper in her dress. Forrester picked up his rucksack and reached down rope and ice-axe.

"Are you sure we cannot return the way we came?" he asked Pierre doubtfully. "Is there no avoiding them somehow on the glacier?"

The guide shook his head decisively.

"None, monsieur," he said with emphasis.

"And we certainly cannot go down the valley."

"Impossible, monsieur."

"What then remains?" demanded the English mountaineer abruptly.

"Only the Davigno ice slope," was the grave reply. "There is nothing else."

Forrester whistled softly. "My word! we can never do it," he muttered in surprise. "That slope—with a lady!"

Denise heard him. Confidently she looked up at the two stalwart men before her.

"We must try," said she.

"And if we fail—"

"The good saints will help us," remarked Pierre piously. But he evidently did not regard the prospect with pleasure, all the same.

At this moment the sound of wood-chopping outside suddenly ceased. The soldier had finished his task and fumbled at the hut door. The inmates heard him swear wonderingly at the obstruction. Forrester flushed angrily.

"At least I have made no promise about this fool," he muttered. And flinging open the hut door he hit the unsuspecting Italian a blow that rendered that worthy incapable, even of profanity, for a short space of time.

After that they tied the indignant Alpino up scientifically with the spare hut rope and put him inside to keep company with the still senseless spy. They closed the wooden shutters, leaving the hut in darkness, and rolled a large stone against the door. Then they tramped resolutely away toward the Pic Glacier with occasional anxious glances behind them. But for a while all was still.

The route by which they had come was soon left. Two hours' steady grind took them over the moraines and across the easy low-lying glacier. Once only when they stopped to rope was the grim determined silence broken.

"Did you hear everything that was said last night?" Forrester asked, fumbling with a knot without looking at Denise—"When you were behind the boulder, you know?"

"Yes, quite clearly," answered the girl in surprise at the question. "Oh!—" She stopped suddenly in some confusion.

"That scoundrel well deserved what he got," muttered her companion with seeming inconsequence. The tangled knot was really a very awkward one.

Denise's cheeks had flamed suddenly. Her eyes dropped unaccountably at the same time.

"It was all in English, too!" remarked the other casually, looking up as the rope straightened itself in wonderful fashion.

"And I have forgotten my English dreadfully," murmured the girl with a little laugh. "But, hark, monsieur, what is that?"

That was a rifle shot. A moment later a shrill bugle call blared out on the quiet mountain side. Would its echoes *never* die away?

Now began the strangest time in all those two wild eventful days. The hut with its tell-tale captives once discovered, angry avengers drawn from some of the finest mountain troops in the world would be hot on the track. The pursuers of the first day became themselves the pursued on the second. And the task before them ere safety back again across the frontier could be reached was formidable indeed.

Above the little band of three rose a gigantic ice-slope many feet in height. Inclined at an abnormally steep angle it is one of those comparatively rare examples in the Alps of a large expanse of hard blue ice. Up it every step must be hewn with painful labor and then must be trodden in with careful steadiness. There exists no possibility of turning that slope on either hand. To right and to left the overhanging cliffs are absolutely unclimbable; down them the water drips with dismal persistency from melting snows above. The mists which had cleared from among the lower icefields, over which the keen-eyed Italians were now doubtless in eager chase, still clung heavily over the higher parts of the slope, concealing the exact direction of the Col. But retreat was now out of the question. They could only advance.

Well was it for the little party that the girl had nerves of iron and the men muscles of steel? Perhaps the former's face was rather paler than usual; certainly Forrester's wore a defiant frown as another signal rifle shot rang out in the valley below. But without another word they turned to the ordeal before them.

Upward, ever upward, step by step, toiling, persevering, panting, Forrester cut his way onward with unfailing vigor, and the others followed in their leader's track. Ever above them glimpses of the unending ice-wall in chilling vistas higher still; ever the monotonous chipping of the sharp steel and the hissing slide of the ice fragments dislodged by the axe. Despite the cold surroundings, large beads of perspiration clustered

thickly on the tanned face of the Alpine clubman, but the strong arms never ceased their everlasting chop, chop, chop, and behind him the girl moved forward with patient skill. Pierre watched the steady progress with keen admiration, steadied his mademoiselle when necessary, and kept a watchful look out on the glacier below. Time was passing on. If they could but crawl up into the mists above ere their pursuers had traced them to the ice-wall all might yet be well. But it was not to be.

A line of little black dots crept into sight in the distance, winding their steady way across the lower glacier in the footsteps of their predecessors. Once indeed they stopped, but it was to point upward to where, just below the bank of writhing mists, Forrester's party was visible to them against the dull white slope of ice. Pierre's warning shout to the Englishman made him cease for a moment from his labor and look downward. He took in the seriousness of the situation at a glance, and his face hardened stubbornly to meet the danger. With a gruff word of encouragement to his two companions he recommenced his dogged cutting in the terribly steep hard ice.

"Let me go to the front now, monsieur, to make the steps," cried Pierre anxiously. "Surely you are tired with the toil."

"No time to waste over changing places," said Forrester grimly. "You attend to the mademoiselle. If either of you slip, I cannot hold you. See to her."

The guide grunted acquiescence. The girl's lips were moving as in prayer. The men on the glacier beneath had stopped and were leveling their rifles. An irregular volley spluttered out on the quiet of the morning.

Now it is an exceedingly difficult thing to fire straight upward with accuracy when the shooters are unsteadied by having had to travel over very rough ground in haste. Moreover the distance was still considerable. Consequently where those bullets went to no man ever knew, and before the Italians could empty their rifles again the fugitives were hidden in the mist.

Forrester was furious with rage at the audacity of the foreigners in firing at an Englishman. But the girl's restraining presence—and his own general breathlessness—kept him from uttering his feelings aloud. Besides, the summit of the

Col must now be close at hand; once there they would be across the frontier in no time.

Then suddenly came the realization of another peril—the last and the greatest. While the pursuers below had halted in hesitation at the foot of the dreaded ice-slope up which was scored the thin track of Forrester's ice-steps, their comrades who had left the hut earlier in the morning, warned by the firing from below, were hastening at their best pace toward the Col. Up the longer easier route they scrambled fast in order to intercept the fugitives. The mist was blowing about before the cold mountain wind in great wreaths of white. A momentary rent in the opaque mass revealed to the climbers the break in the dark rocky ridge fringing the great ice slope where the pass lay.

Forrester set his teeth hard. A few more hastily cut steps and he had hauled the girl unceremoniously over the edge of the ice onto the welcome rocks above. There the ground at least was level—thank Heaven for that! Their lives were no longer staked on every single step taken by each member of the little party. The relief in that one fact alone was indescribable. He seized the girl's hand and tore across the débris with which the top of the pass is strewn. Pierre followed with a run.

Grim figures with leveled rifles came bursting through the mists in chase. Angry voices called on them to stop. Threats, imprecations, pistol shots, came hurling, as it seemed, on every side. Through the chilling death-white vapors it appeared to Forrester's overwrought senses as if a conflict had broken out all round them. With grasp tightened on the small hand that lay in his, he sped on, dazed and doubting. Already through the driving dampness the watery gleam of the Lake of the Dead shimmered dully before his straining eyes. Yonder lay the frontier, its line marked by the battered old wooden cross, weathered by countless storms. There was refuge, there safety, from the rushing foe behind. Something—was it a bullet?—spattered on the ground at his feet. Something else whistled keenly past his cheek. But surely the direction was reverse. Were there enemies, then, in front as well as behind?

Onward still—onward ever!

Shadowy men seemed to rise on either hand, as in a dream, queer shapes of a bygone age loomed for a moment and were

gone. What was that vision—it could have been nothing more—of tall square caps, old-fashioned imperial uniforms, muskets such as no army uses now gripped by weird soldier forms of a forgotten generation? What was that curious echo ringing in his ears, "Vive l'Empereur!"? That was impossible and yet—

A quick biting puff of cold mountain wind rolled, as by a magic-dispelling power, the mists from before his path. The lake lay on his right hand somber and silent. The old cross rose gauntly on his left. A dead hush seemed to fall of a sudden on the desolate scene. In the distance the French mountains stood outspread before him; the frontier line was passed. The vision, if such it was, had vanished. The noise of shouting and of shots had died away. A wondrous quiet had come. They three were alone.

Denise Ruvigny's face was white as the snow around her. Pierre the guide staggered forward into safety like a drunken man. An unaccountable feeling of fear had seized on Forrester—he knew not why. He stared back fixedly across the now deserted pass, to where its crest cut the sky line beyond the tarn, till his eyes ached. No living thing was visible anywhere.

"Did you see them too?" whispered Denise in awestruck tones, creeping closer as if for protection to her companion.

"Whom do you mean?" asked Forrester uneasily. He shivered slightly as he spoke. The afternoon had fallen; it was cold and sunless.

"Surely, monsieur has not forgotten," said the girl solemnly. "It is the eighteenth of June—the day of Waterloo—the hour of the coming of Marie Davigno."

Then she added softly the words of the tale of old.

"Jusqu'à la mort, et après."

"Come, monsieur, let us go."

The story may be doubted. Another explanation of the sudden panic flight of the Italian soldiery at the moment of successful capture may be found. Whatever John Forrester saw in the whirling mists on the lonely mountain pass he keeps to himself. And you must know that charming little French lady, who is now his wife, very well indeed before you mention the matter in her presence. If you are wise you will understand that silence is indeed a golden garland to be preserved on some occasions with a wondrous care.



**PROFESSION for a
Lady: The Story of a Business Venture, by Alice Duer
Miller. Illustrations by Florence
England Nosworthy***

THE question is," said Aunt Julia, "how my brother
ever came to lose so much money."

"The question is," said Aunt Henrietta, "how Jane is
to support herself."

"The question is," said Aunt Lily, "what are we going to
do for her?" And to judge by the ladies' expression this
was the most pertinent of the three.

"Really, Lily," said Aunt Henrietta, who was the only

*Written for Short Stories.

one of the three sisters who had married, and was respected accordingly, "I do not feel under further obligations toward Jane. She has been, well, let us say unfortunate in some of her speeches to me. As soon as I heard of the condition in which my poor brother had left his affairs, I sent for Jane, and said: 'My dear child, from this day you will make your home with me. You shall have the North bedroom—No, no,' I said, as I saw her about to make difficulties, 'this shall not be mere charity; you shall be my secretary and keep the Orphan Asylum accounts.' 'Dear Aunt Henrietta,' she said, in that soft purring way of hers, just like her mother, 'it isn't charity I mind, so much as the North bedroom.'"

"Well, it is like a barn in winter," said Miss Julia, reflectively.

Mrs. Boggs allowed it to appear that this remark had failed to please, but the other ladies were too much absorbed to observe her.

"Of course," Miss Julia continued, "she could live with us at Lawnwood, but it would be a great change for her after what she has been accustomed to."

"I can scarcely hope that your accommodations would please her better than mine," said Mrs. Boggs, bitingly.

"I should at least offer the poor child the *best we have*," returned Miss Julia. Aunt Henrietta looked as oblivious as if a little boy in the street had just thrown a snowball at her, and Miss Lily chipped in innocuously with:

"What a pity it is that Jane has no taste for needlework. Some of those skate-bags at the fair brought very good prices and were not hard to do."

"Needlework!" said Aunt Henrietta, with a sniff. "Do you know that one of her ideas was to become a dressmaker?"

"Oh, dear," said Miss Lily, "I should not like to see the name of Woodman on a sign in the window!"

"I should not like to order my dresses from Jane," said Mrs. Boggs. "She could not even darn her own stockings. I have seen her throw them away if her maid was not there to mend them for her."

"No, no," said Miss Julia, "I'm sure our first plan was the best. She can live with us at Lawnwood, and come in here every morning to the Parish house, where, the Bishop says, he will give her a position to check the sewing-school children's hats and coats and overshoes. She could get away by three

and be home with us before five, and she will earn twenty-five dollars a month, for eight months in the year. As soon as she comes back from New York we will arrange it."

"There!" said Aunt Henrietta, "and may I ask why she ever went to the Daytons at such a time? Why did not she prefer to spend Christmas with her own family? Her fare to New York was an item, and feeing all that retinue of servants—for you may be sure that Jane will fee them down to the kitchen maid—were all expenses she ought not to have afforded in the present state of her finances."



"She is rather headstrong, sometimes," sighed Miss Lily, reluctantly.

"If," Aunt Henrietta continued, "she had an ounce of energy or executive ability she might attempt something like this. She fumbled in her reticule and produced an oblong envelope. "I received this circular this morning. It struck me at once as an excellent idea." She put on her glasses and read:

MISS GATES,

Room 503, Goliath Building, New York City.

Ladies unwilling to undertake the physical exertion and

mental anxiety of Christmas shopping may be assured that by employing Miss Gates their purchases will be carefully and economically selected, attractively tied up, and promptly delivered. Miss Gates will buy designated articles at definite prices, or if it be desired to avoid the whole problem Miss Gates will undertake, on being furnished with a list of the names, ages and occupations of those on whom it is intended to bestow presents, to select and dispatch such suitable objects to each, as will insure complete satisfaction to all.

Charges will be five per cent.
of amount of purchase.

Out of town expressage extra."

"Now that," said Aunt Henrietta, laying down her glasses, "is what I call an intelligent idea. It will be well worth my while to save myself the fatigue of elbowing my way about the crowded shops, to say nothing of a trip to New York. Old

Mrs. Forbes is going to send to her for a case of champagne, and knitting needles and all sorts of things; and Mrs. Herbert, who I am sure spends thousands at Christmas time, has turned

over everything to this woman—just sent her a descriptive list of all her relations. She was telling me how amusing it was to make it out."

"Why, do you know," said Miss Lily, who had been industriously calculating, "that that would be fifty dollars on every thousand? Five orders like that would be more than the Parish house all the year round! Fancy!"



"I doubt if there are many orders like Mrs. Herbert's," said Mrs. Boggs.

The Herberts were new arrivals at St. Albans. He was the owner of large mills in the neighborhood, and their wealth and gaiety were rather dazzling to the older residents.

For the next few days the approach of Christmas kept the three ladies busy, but the day after Christmas they were again in solemn conclave examining the possibility of raising the Bishop to thirty dollars a month in consideration of the great number of children whose goloshes must be checked.

Aunt Henrietta had written to Jane advising her immediate return as a "great opportunity" (she thought it undesirable to be more specific) had presented itself.

"Have you heard from her?" asked Miss Lily, as soon as the library door closed behind them.

Aunt Henrietta did not answer but she held out a letter with a gesture more eloquent than words. Miss Lily took it and read it aloud:

DEAR AUNT HEN :—

Thank you so much for thinking of me. The gray ulster is extremely warm, and will, I am sure, serve *a useful purpose*. As for the opportunity you mention, I must express my gratitude to you all for your solicitude on my account, but another opportunity has presented itself here, and as Wall Street is the financial center of the world, I think I had better keep next this one.

Yours,

JANE.

Miss Lily's voice fell in horror at the last words. The ladies were still exchanging glances of disgust when the footman opened the door and announced:

"Mrs. Herbert!"

Mrs. Herbert ran in all sables and pearls, and in evident distress. She kissed all three of the ladies, or rather flung herself from the arms of one to the other, while she gasped:

"O, dear, Mrs. Boggs, forgive my coming in like this, but I know so few people here, and you have been so kind to me, and I'm in such an awkward position!"

"My dear, what is the matter? Frederick, a glass of sherry for Mrs. Herbert. Sit down, my dear!"

Mrs. Herbert sat down in the center of the circle, undoing her furs, while the ladies bent forward in attitudes of sympathetic attention.

"Well, you know that dreadful Christmas shopper, Miss Gates?" she began. The ladies nodded.

"Well, she said she would take charge of all my Christmas presents, if I would send her a list of the people I wanted to send them to, and so I did." She was approaching tears. "I sent a description, and little cards with messages on them to go in each box, and I pinned the description to the right card, so that there should not be any mistake." Here her handkerchief went to her eyes. "And what do you think she did?" A pause. "She forgot to unpin one of them—the worst!"

"How unfortunate! How careless!" cried Miss Julia.

"It was for my husband's stepmother," continued Mrs. Herbert. "A dreadful old woman—no, I don't mean that, but I like her much less than *some* of his relations, and it is most important to keep on good terms with her, as she owns half the mills. I shall never dare tell him!"

"And what had you said of her?"

"I can't remember quite all, but I know I said, 'This old lady is sixty-five, though she is always talking about what she means to do when she is fifty. Her tastes are literary, but don't give her books. She doesn't like them. It is not so important that her present should be tasteful, as that it should look as if it cost a great deal of money.'"

"My dear!" said the ladies together.

"That is not all," Mrs. Herbert went on sadly, shaking her head to the consolatory glass of sherry, which Frederick was presenting on a tray. "She wrote and asked me if it were my handwriting—fortunately it did not look like mine, because I had hurt my finger and could not hold a pen the way I usually do. Of course I wrote back that it was not. So then she found out about this Christmas shopper, and she thinks it was she. I've just heard that she is sending my husband's brother, who is her lawyer, to New York to see Miss Gates and get an apology from her, on the threat of a libel suit. Of course this woman won't apologize for what she did not do, and it will all come out, and what shall I do?"

"What shall you do, my dear," said Mrs. Boggs, with firm-

ness. "Calm yourself. The woman must apologize. See your brother-in-law, explain the case to him."

Mrs. Herbert moaned and shook her head. "I can't do that. I am afraid of Richard. He might tell my husband."

"You must make it clear that he cannot do so. He can represent to this woman that if she will accept the situation, which is after all of her own making, and write a satisfactory letter to your mother-in-law, that you will"—Mrs. Boggs hesitated, as others have done before her, in search of a polite expression for bribery, and finally ended rather lamely with "you will do something kind for her?"

Mrs. Herbert protested that it would be a dreadful ordeal to tell her brother-in-law, who was a superior sort of person, but she admitted that she would have ample opportunity, as he always came to luncheon with her when he passed through St. Albans. At length, upheld by the sympathy and advice of the ladies, she took her departure.

At luncheon her brother-in-law was more unbending than she had expected. Indeed he laughed himself speechless at the description of his respected stepmother, and went away declaring that he would have no difficulty in obtaining the apology for nothing. He would have nothing to do with bribes.

It was with a stern and legal manner that he stepped from the express elevator in the Goliath Building that very afternoon, and opened a glass door, which was simply inscribed "Miss Gates, Shopper." The room was small and bright. A large table littered with parcels and paper and string, took up most of it. Near the window stood a small desk on which Herbert saw a number of catalogues and advertisements of sales and disordered correspondence. From these arose at his entrance one of the most elegant young women that Herbert had ever beheld. She and her appointments seemed to him absolutely perfect from the top of her conspicuous blonde head to her little well-clad feet.

His sentiments became less legal, but his manner remained the same.

"Miss Gates," he said, "My name is Herbert. I am the lawyer of Mrs. V. T. Herbert."

Miss Gates looked vaguely at her pile of letters. "Oh, yes," she said. "You want to talk about that absurd libel suit. Pray, sit down. Or," she added, with what he knew she

considered a good business manner, "perhaps you had better see my lawyer."



"Who is your lawyer?"

She looked hopeless. "I have not got one," she answered,

but the next moment, added cheerfully, "but I could get one, couldn't I?"

Dick Herbert could not help smiling, but recovering his gravity hastily, he said: "It will not, I think, be necessary for you to go to that trouble and expense——"

"You *are* expensive, aren't you?" said Miss Gates, as if she had scored a point.

"The matter," Dick continued, "can be settled more simply. It would be, of course, very bad for your business if this became generally known, and——"

"I shall not keep on with this business. It is horrid and troublesome, and people are so ungrateful."

"Ungrateful!" said Dick, foolishly allowing himself to be thrown off the track.

She nodded. "Think what a beautiful umbrella I selected for Christmas for *you*." She sighed. "It was fifty cents more than Mrs. Herbert wanted to spend, and so I paid it out of my own commission."

"Upon my word," cried Dick, "I had forgotten that I was on the list, too. And it was you who bought that umbrella. It is, I may say, an ideal umbrella. The only perfect example of the sort I ever saw. An umbrella I am proud to carry. My dear Miss Gates, how can I thank you?"

"You can thank me," replied Miss Gates, with directness, "by going away and letting me finish my letters. It is getting late, and I want to get up town in time to dress for dinner."

It was at this point that his evil genius persuaded Herbert to say, while he persuaded himself that his professional instinct was at work:

"You really ought not to work any more to-night. I have a hansom at the door now, and if you will permit me the pleasure of dining in your society, we can, I am sure, settle this business before we have finished soup. I am a stranger in New York, Miss Gates, but I think I know where as good a dinner——"

He stopped, Miss Gates had risen and was looking at him with an expression that was more chilling than a cold shower bath. He stopped, but she did not instantly speak. When she did, her tone was like ice:

"Mr. Herbert, it will not be my misfortune, I hope, ever to address you again. It is not, perhaps, necessary in the

legal profession to know a lady when you see one, but a little tact and common sense are never a hindrance. As, however, you do not seem to be in possession of these qualities, let me make the facts perfectly clear to you. My name is Woodman. You have probably heard of my father, who died recently, leaving nothing of a once large fortune. I have been trying to earn my own living, without the knowledge of my family. For this reason I have assumed a business name. I see, however, that my aunts were right in supposing that a lady can live safely only at home. It is such men as you, Mr. Herbert, who make it so. I will send the letter you wish in the morning. If, as is possible, we should ever meet in St. Albans, I shall not recognize you, and I trust you will do what you can to save me the necessity of making my opinion of you more marked. At present I wish you good afternoon!"

That very afternoon she took her ticket home.

When she entered the empty Pullman car—the train was not a favorite—her eye fell instantly on a familiar umbrella which lay across the seat next her own. A valise marked R. H. was standing there also. She started and looked hastily round the car. They were apparently to be the only passengers. Every other seat in the car was at her disposal.

And yet she did not change her seat.





HITE Orchids and Cypress: An Inter- national Episode by Dorothy Lord Maltby. Illustrations by Louise B. Mansfield*



HE cricket match was more than half over. A picked eleven from the English colony and Altenhaus college boys, English also, were playing a cricket team of their own nationality who had come over from Wiesbaden. The ground upon which they were playing was German, but the scene was typically English in spite of the goodly sprinkling of titled foreigners.

Cyril Fitzgerald stood leaning against the trunk of a huge old apple tree, looking off across the field. Near him on the grass lay Beresford; he had just come in from the bat, and was still mopping his brow half lazily as if more from habit than for any other reason.

"Why aren't you playing to-day, Fitz? We need you badly, old chap. The Wiesbadens are putting up a deuced good game."

Fitzgerald brought his eyes back from the entrance gates where they had been resting for the last few minutes. "Too hot to play," he answered.

*Written for Short Stories.

"Fancy you were afraid you'd soil your togs, Fitz," glancing at the spotless white flannels Cyril wore; the pale blue silk binding and college coat-of-arms emblazoned on the pockets in the same delicate hue set off his dark coloring admirably, and Beresford thought absently, "Deuced fine looking chap, Fitz."

Suddenly the man standing moved. Beresford followed his glance. "Oh, I say," he exclaimed, rising on his elbow, "who is she? What a lot of side!" Fitzgerald's eyes darkened, and a slight frown appeared between them, but the man at his feet carelessly kept on. "Think she's an American, Fitz? Tell by looking at her feet. Jove, she's a little beauty! Is that Lady St. John she's with? Gad, yes, and the young Prince of X. Not much use trying to run against a prince, Fitz."

Cyril Fitzgerald looked down at Beresford, said not a word and walked away.

"Fitzgerald!" It was the headmaster's little wife who called him. He hastened to her side.

"Just pass the fruit salad to Lady St. John."

He took the bowl from her, with a heart that beat a trifle less steadily than ordinarily. "Salads, Lady St. John?"

"Oh, you, Mr. Fitzgerald—this is good of you—that will do—I want to present you to my little American friend, Miss Raydon. Priscilla—Mr. Fitzgerald."

He bowed, quietly offering her the salad. He saw two large brown eyes which smiled up into his, and the salad nearly ended its existence.

"How good you are to come like a ministering angel with this delicious beverage—I'm very warm," with a little sigh. "I suppose you know all about all that?" waving a small white-gloved hand at the field lying like a velvet carpet before her, with its white cricketers running back and forth.

"Yes, a little," he smiled down at her. "May I come back when I have done my duty?"

"Do, and tell me all about it."

When he came back Lady St. John had moved to speak with old Capt. Hanscome, late of Her Majesty's service, and he dropped into her vacant chair. The young prince was talking to Miss Raydon: "Ah, oh, yes—well that was a square leg hit just now that young Stanton made," he heard him say.

Miss Raydon turned: "Do you know Prince Otto, Mr. Fitzgerald?" The two men shook hands. Prince Otto uttered a word of apology, and joined a group at the tea table.

"The prince was trying to instruct me in cricket."

"I heard him explaining a square leg hit."

"Yes, it's all very puzzling; I'm afraid I am not clever at learning; now, base ball, why, I know everything about that—it's fascinating."

"Is it? Will you teach me?"

Her eyes opened wide. "Why two can't play."

"Can't they? I fancied it was like tennis. Do you play tennis?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I say, wouldn't it be jolly if you'd play with me. The Army House has very good courts"—he broke off, abruptly. "I don't suppose you would, would you? I've only just met you."

"We'll let Lady St. John decide—she's coming this way now. Who is it with her?"

"Beresford, the Earl of L's younger son."

"How imposing! Are you a 'Lion' too, Mr. Fitzgerald?"

"No, my people are just plain civil service; the governor's to be knighted shortly, I believe; he doesn't go in for that sort of thing—the Mater's rather keen on it, though. Personally I am Army. I'm here on leave. I couldn't resist revisiting my old college, you see," glancing down at the Army House coat he was wearing.

"Priscilla, Beresford here has begged me to introduce him and I have at last consented." The girl nodded brightly. Lady St. John moved off again.

"Has old Fitzgerald been boring you to death, Miss Raydon? 'Raydon's' right, isn't it? I didn't quite catch what Lady St. John said! Is that your full name?"

"My full name is Priscilla Lloyd Raydon," and she dropped him a mock courtesey.

"Hyphenated?"

"Hyphenated? Oh, Lloyd-Raydon; no."

"That's too bad. I like it better. I think I'll call you Miss Lloyd-Raydon; it's jollier."

"Is it? I don't think I ever thought of it like that."

"Lady St. John says you are to be here with her some time;

you must let me take you in to dinner at the queen's jubilee banquet, won't you?"

"What makes you think I will be asked?"

"Oh, I say, you know Lady St. John would——" he stopped.

"Would what?" sweetly.



"Oh, raise a jolly row, you know."

"No, I don't know. She's beckoning now, and here comes the prince, so I suppose it is time for us to be going."

"Remember, you've promised to let me take you in to dinner."

"Indeed, I remember I *didn't* promise, and besides the committee have the placing all arranged. Good-bye." She nodded over her shoulder. "Are you going to carry my sunshade for me, Mr. Fitzgerald?"

Cyril Fitzgerald's eyes were full of thanks; he had stood quietly by while Beresford had monopolized the conversation.

More than one pair of eyes followed the girl, as escorted by the two men she crossed the lawn to say good-bye to her hostess. The small head poised gracefully under the

large picture hat she wore; the assured carriage, even the fluffy white skirts daintily lifted above the tiny shoes, showed her nationality, though Priscilla Raydon never made the mistake, so despised by English people, of being overdressed. Beautiful and attractive as she was, she was simply a charm-

ing, well-bred American girl, though the quiet dignity with which she moved and her low sweet voice, were far from typifying the foreigner's idea of the American girl.

"Here you are! Well, Priscilla, how did you like your first cricket match?"

"Oh, immensely; though I'm afraid I didn't see much of it."

"Of course not—no one ever does; it breaks the awkward pauses when one can't think of anything to say while having a duty talk with some deaf old dowager. Well, Fitzgerald, I am glad you took such good care of my little girl. Drop in to tea."

Prince Otto helped her into the carriage.

"Lady St. John?"

"Yes."

"May Miss Raydon come over for tennis on the Army House courts?"

"That's for Miss Raydon to decide."

"I'd love to," the girl called back as they drove away.

"Cyril's a dear boy," Lady St. John mused. "I thought you seemed to get on rather well, Priscilla."

"I think we did."

Lady Idonea leaned back on the cushions and glanced through languid lids at the prince. Prince Otto was doing his best to entertain Miss Raydon and his efforts did not seem to be wasted, for every little while her fresh girlish laugh would ring out.

With uncovered head, the soft summer wind stirring his brown hair lightly, Cyril Fitzgerald stood in the road, gazing through a long ribbon of dust, at the carriage fast disappearing. A corner was reached—they were out of sight; then turning, he walked thoughtfully over to the Army House.

He could not see her anywhere, but then he was ridiculously early. Cyril Fitzgerald moved about pretending to talk with one and another of the English girls who were already there, but his glance sought constantly for the soft brown hair that crowned Miss Raydon's little head. At last he espied Lady St. John surrounded by a group of men, and surmised that the young girl he sought was hidden behind some of the black coats, brightened in most cases by orders

worn on brilliant ribbons hung about the neck, or pinned upon the breast. He threaded his way in and out until he reached her.

"Do you know Fate has been more kind to me than I deserve?" he said, bending over the small gloved hand she gave him.

"Ah, I doubt that; tell me about your good fortune?"

"Unfortunately, it will not be the good news to you that it was to me."

"Let me be the one to decide that, Mr. Fitzgerald."

"I am to have the honor of taking our one fair American guest in to dinner; need I tell you that it is a great pleasure?"

"I am glad," she said, simply. "Just think what I should have done if I had fallen to the lot of Mr. Benham! Do you know he asked me to walk up to the Schloss the other afternoon; and really all he said the whole time was 'Quite so,' and once or twice he varied it with, 'I dare say.' It got to be most trying."

Fitzgerald laughed. "Poor old Benham! He's an odd chap, but very kind hearted."

"I know it, but one needs more than that to make one sought after at dinners."

Fitzgerald offered his arm. "I see Colonel Rees-Dudley is taking Lady St. John in; there is to be no further precedence given this evening—shall we go?"

The large ballroom of the Hotel de L'Europe presented a brilliant scene; the walls were draped with English flags and with those of Germany; the table glittered with heavy gold plate and crystal; huge masses of flowers piled high in German fashion filled the air with an intense perfume; favors of tiny silk English flags were at every place.

Fitzgerald glanced at the plate in front of him. "I say, I hope we'll know what we're eating!"

Priscilla laughed. "I fancy we'll know the soup when it comes if not what kind it is."

"These German dishes are a sort of mystery to me; I don't speak the language, you know."

"I haven't had a chance to tell you how sorry we were to have missed you when you called the other afternoon."

"Yes; I was sorry, too. I've had beastly hard luck, I've started three times, and each time I've seen you going off with someone else."

"Really, I haven't seen you; how odd."

"I dare say not."

"You're jesting; you didn't really start three times?"

"Really. The first time I saw you disappearing with Beresford in the direction of the links; the second time you and Lady St. John were driving in state with one of the Saxo-Broussias; and yesterday Lady Idonea said you were gone for a walk with Prince Otto. So you see there has been no time for poor 'me.'" He gave a sigh, intended to be half mocking, but it missed its aim, and was more than half serious. "An earl's son—a prince—was the other 'somebody', too?" he asked, smiling down at her.

"Only Graf von Nydeck taking us to a duel."

"Dear me; you don't impress one as being blood-thirsty."

"I'm not a bit; but then you see," laughingly, "I've been brought up on Yale-Harvard football games, and just to see little tufts of hair go floating about, and sparks flying, seemed quite tame. Still, we were not near enough to see the horrid details. I'm afraid," she broke off, "this is rather an odd dinner conversation. Tell me some way I can make reparation for all the times when I was not at home?"

"I hardly dare ask; after dinner there is to be an informal dance; I don't go in for that sort of thing—would you mind sitting out one or two with me?"

"You shall have the two. A dance—oh, it will be good to dance once more! Traveling about one doesn't get much chance for that kind of thing."

At last the long dinner was over; the queen's health had been drunk, and "God Save the Queen" had been sung. Fitzgerald led Miss Raydon out onto the veranda. "You see I am taking the first."

Lieutenant Stoughton came hurrying up. "Prince Otto is looking for you, Miss Raydon; I sent him off to search the gardens," with a grin. "You'll give me the first?"

"I've promised that to Mr. Fitzgerald, but you may have the next."

"Thanks; don't forget."

Just then the strains of "*Sei nicht böse*" came floating out, and Cyril noticed that the small foot in its pink satin slipper tapped the pavement restlessly.

"It's too bad of me to take the first; you should be dancing."

"Why I'm going to dance; there is no hurry."

Fitzgerald glanced down. "You need a flower in your hair to give the artistic touch artists talk about; will you take this?" He removed a splendid white orchid from his button-hole and handed it to her.

"It is beautiful," she said. "I did not know they could be procured in this little place."

"They are a sort of *rara avis*, I confess. Here come Beresford and Lieutenant Stoughton. Now I shall lose you."



"How-de-do, Miss Lloyd-Raydon? Are you going to deign to dance with a chap?"

"I'll think it over Mr. *Earl-Beresford*."

"Oh, I say now, you're chaffing. Jove!" he broke off as he caught sight of the flower in the girl's hair. "Why didn't you give Miss Lloyd-Raydon some trifle like a diamond necklace, Fitz? It would have been jolly less conspicuous."

Fitzgerald frowned. Miss Raydon flushed darkly, and said with dignity, "Is it so unusual for a man to give a girl flowers that it is to be remarked upon, Mr. Beresford?"

"No offence meant; but you don't appreciate that Fitz spent the whole day searching the town for a white orchid,

and procured the only one ever seen in the village before or since; the rest of the chaps have been offering him fabulous sums for that orchid—there's the second—I must go. Give me a dance Miss Lloyd-Raydon, and I'll apologize upon my knees."

Lieutenant Stoughton offered his arm. "Mine, Miss Raydon, I believe?"

"Good-bye," she called to Fitzgerald, who stood leaning against a pillar of the veranda. "I'll give you the tenth, if you'd like."

He nodded. "Thanks."

It seemed to Cyril as if the tenth would never come; but when at last she came out of the crowded room with Prince Otto, he felt that he would have been more than paid had he waited double the time.

"You are tired," he said. "Come down to the end of the veranda; there is a table I have had saved, and we'll see if we can't manage to get a breath of cool air."

"This is nice, after all that rush in there," with a nod toward the ballroom.

"Kellner!" Fitzgerald looked at Miss Raydon with a comical expression as the waiter promptly arrived. "That's all I know; I'm afraid you will have to give the order. Champagne. Now, I dare say he'll understand that."

"Not for me, thanks; an ice, please."

Fitzgerald looked at the Kellner. "Bring *alles*," he said with a wave of his hand.

The man grinned, and after considerable time returned with what was evidently "*alles*," from the extent of the supper.

The little gilt lamp with its rose-colored shade cast a soft light upon the girl's happy face. Fitzgerald could only look, and conversation flagged; but Priscilla Raydon chatted brightly on, giving him a résumé of her evening, sketching her partners so accurately that Cyril did not need to be told their names.

When Fitzgerald at last had to take her back to Lady St. John, the queen's Diamond Jubilee dinner was over.

Lady St. John tapped lightly on Priscilla's door. "May I come in, dear?"

"Of course. Have you come to talk over the evening with me?"

"Yes. It was quite a success, I thought. Colonel Rees-Dudley deserves a great deal of praise." Lady Idonea lay back in a low chair. "Priscilla, my dear, what *are* you about?"

The girl's eyes sought hers. "About?" she said innocently.

"Oh, you provoking child; I could shake you!" Lady St. John exclaimed. "Here with Prince Otto as attentive as any



girl could wish, and Graf von Nydeck doing everything he can think of to please you, you waste your time on Cyril Fitzgerald. Cyril's a dear boy, but he's only a subaltern after all."

"But Lady St. John, you are quite mistaken; indeed you are!" The girl's tone sounded distressed. "None of them think of me in the way you mean—oh, it is quite impossible!"

"But child, it isn't impossible." She rose to go, and then stooped to kiss the girl. "Priscilla, my dear, I am very fond

of you, and I want to keep you on this side of the water. Don't forget what I have said, dear," and she closed the door.

In the weeks that followed Cyril Fitzgerald spent as much of his time as possible with Lady St. John and Miss Raydon, though to him it seemed all too little that he saw of the girl, for rarely when he called was she at home. Always the maid told him, "Miss Raydon has gone riding with Prince Otto," or, "Graf von Nydeck has taken my lady and Miss Raydon to the opera at M.—" But as the weeks passed, each time he saw her, Cyril Fitzgerald grew ever more deeply in love with the fair American girl.

A party had been arranged to go up to the Schloss that evening to a "symphony" concert, and as Fitzgerald stood before the glass adjusting his cravat, he was making up his mind that soon he must tell her he loved her—going on like this day by day in uncertainty was unendurable. Of course he was an ass to dream that she would care for him, but he must know.

It was Beethoven's beautiful symphony in C moll, and though passionately fond of music Cyril found he could not even hear it; he could think of nothing, look at nothing, but the girl opposite him. How sad she looked! Once or twice he fancied her eyes were wet with tears. She was pale, too, or was it the soft, gray gown, relieved only by a bunch of violets, which made her look so?

The "symphony" was over. "Would you care to walk on the terrace, Miss Raydon?"

"Yes, indeed. I love that symphony, but to-night I didn't want to hear it; perhaps we can walk off the spell it has cast over me."

They walked on in silence, threading their way in and out among the many promenaders. On their left the hawthorn hedge was lighted every few paces by a soft light from a glowworm, and daintily flitting here and there were myriads of fireflies, with their little lamps of pale yellow, orange, red, and electric green. The promenaders were getting fewer now, and soon the strains of the "Waldweben" music came floating out softly on the warm summer air.

"The interval is over; we must be going back."

"Not just yet," and Cyril Fitzgerald laid a detaining hand on the girl's arm. "It is cooler here," he said.

"Yes," she assented, and leaned her arms upon the

railing, looking off across the plain below. At their feet lay the little town, half asleep, with now and then a light twinkling from some villa or shop, and stretching away off to the Hartz mountains reached the great length of fertile valley.

They were quite alone now. Only the bronze statue of Victor von Scheffel looked down upon them benignly. "You seem sad; is it true?"

"Yes, I am afraid it is."

"Nothing where I can help you?"

"No," she said, "bad news from home—I am going back to-morrow."

"Going back!" Englishman though he was, his voice trembled. "Don't go back, you must stay. I cannot get on without you! Don't speak!" as the girl tried to stop him. "I know you hadn't thought of any such thing—I know I don't amount to much, but I love you, and I will be worthy of you! Can't you tell me that you will not forget me, and when I have proved there is something in me, may I come and try to win your love?"

She laid a hand timidly upon his sleeve. "I am very sorry—very sorry—I did not dream; it is all quite impossible."

"Am I so very horrid?" he asked.

"It is not that, oh, it is not that!"

He looked into her eyes. "There is some one else. I might have known. Prince Otto is a fine fellow—you will be happy!"

She laughed half hysterically. "It is not the prince; we are just good friends. It is some one at home!" and a little sob escaped her.

"I did not know you were engaged," he said calmly.

"I'm not. I thought I didn't care, and came away, but I've had this cable—he is dangerously ill—and I am going back to America—and him."

He looked down at the small bowed head. "Poor little girl—poor little girl—things were hard enough without my making them any harder. I'm always making a mess of things—I have all my life. Shall we be going back? Lady St. John will miss you."

They turned and walked toward the castle. He stopped at the turn in the walk. "This is good-bye," he said, "I may never see you again. I hope you will be happy." He lifted the hand she gave him to his lips. "Good-bye," he said again.



THE Amok of Wangsa: A Tale of the Malay Penin- sula, by Ella Lowery Moseley*



WANGSA was the last of the *orang lauts*, or sea pirates, who infested the Malacca straits and neighboring waters, in the days when British guns had begun to enforce the law and order prevailing there at present. It was because of these guns that on the morning leading to the last important event of his life, he was compelled to run his prau into a sheltered cove two miles east of Jemelang, to send his subordinates with the captured opium, silks and birds' nests by circuitous routes into the town to certain Chinese shopkeepers, and to strike out all alone through the jungle to reach the town himself. He had taken but few steps in that direction, however, before the sun, which shone brightly, was suddenly obscured by a light veil as a shower danced across sea, jungle and clearing. "Allah compassionate!" he exclaimed, and paused to pluck a spray of acanthus and thrust it into the folds of his belt for protection against the evil spirits who attack unfortunate mortals they find out doors when it rains and shines simultaneously. Then after feeling the knot in his sarong for the piece of *los* wood tied there as a charm against tigers, he went on. For greater security as he passed a spot where a month before a tiger had been killed after eating a couple of men, he muttered over an infallible spell:

"Kun Payah kun!
Let celestial splendor reside in me,
Whoever talks of attacking me
A skillful lion shall oppose him."

*Written for Short Stories.

Passing safe this dangerous locality a new fear possessed his superstitious mind. The sleepy note of a barbarek or night jar disturbed in its dozing in some jungle depth by a chattering monkey, filled his heart with dread, and expecting every moment to see the Spectre Huntsman, whose mere touch is death, burst upon him through the masses of palms, vines and ferns that bordered the path, he hastily recited another long incantation ending:

"O man of Katapang,
Get thee back to the forest of Ranchah,
Afflict not my body with pain or disease."

There was an evil spirit for him behind each tree, and his repertoire of charms being exhausted, he chanted passages from the Koran, until he emerged into an open space. Here relieved of his fears, he began thinking of the wealth with which he had returned and of how he could now force old Penghulu Ulam to give him his daughter Casoma in marriage. It was said by all the people that Casoma was as beautiful as the fabulous princess, the Malay Aphrodite, who was first discovered to man's eyes afloat in a foam bell on a river. Wangsa had satisfied himself as to the truth of the report by creeping under Penghulu Ulam's house at night and observing the maiden through the slits in the bamboo floor, thus getting the better of the absurd Malay custom which forbids the meeting of young men and women before marriage. Penghulu Ulam had hitherto steadfastly refused all Wangsa's offers. The old man was currying favor with the English and did not desire an alliance with the most notorious *orang laut* in the district. Wangsa felt sure that by offering sufficient money he would yet win the desire of his heart. He soon began reciting from the Koran again. For while in the jungle this recitation inspired his courage, it now served equally well to express his elation.

As he neared the town he saw approaching him Khateb, one of the bearers of the royal cuspidor, and his recent good humor darkened like a spot of milk into which a drop of indigo has fallen. He hated Khateb for his good looks and his tall shapely figure whose long arms and legs came swinging along the path in the step known as "planting beans." Wangsa being short, squat and bandy legged could with

ease employ only the short step called "planting spinach." Khateb had a fine, open countenance and beautiful white teeth, while Wangsa had a furtive eye and a face deeply wrinkled by his evil trades, and his teeth had been filed and blackened by parents not so enlightened as Khateb's. He hated him also because of the possession of a kris of such magic qualities as would render its wearer invulnerable. Tradition said it had been made of the steel left over after the forging of God's bolt, Ka'abh; that it was smelted in the palm of Adam, the son of God's prophet, and damasked with the juice of flowers in a Chinese furnace. If cleaned at the mouth of a river all the fish would come floating up dead. The blade was like a narrow, undulating, delicate blue flame, was faintly traced with gold, and near the handle middle and point bore the famous damask Alif, so called from its resemblance to the Arabian letter so named. The handle of ivory and gold had the mystical shape of a human figure seated with folded arms and with a hood rising from the back of its neck over its head. As Khateb approached, the handle could be seen protruding above the folds of his sarong, turned close to his body on the left side, thus indicating him to be at peace with the world. A pigeon in one hand and a calling-tube of bamboo showed his present business to be the snaring of wild fowl.

"Tabek" (good morning), said Wangsa, touching Khateb's hand, then bringing his own back as high as his chest, in deference to the rank of the bearer of the Royal cuspidor and with a forced smile making his face resemble an iguana yawning. "Has a troop of elephants passed through the padi fields of His Heavenborn Highness that the noble Khateb must go to the jungle for food?"

"Not so," answered Khateb proudly, "His Highness has padi and all other foods more than enough for all his people, but a slave may not ask his Lord for raiment like unto that His Highness wears himself. Know you that in the shop of the fat Chinaman, Yum Lee, is a *baju* of silk, embroidered with gold and of a color like the glorious red purple dye whose inventor sailed the world for three years, trying in vain to remove the stains from his hands. Perhaps I may snare a thousand pigeons, if so the price of the thousand shall buy me the *baju*."

"Ah! there is going to be a great feast? Perhaps the wedding of the Raja Muda?"

"Ha! Do only princes marry? There is a maiden whose parents have reared her tenderly as one carries a vessel of oil on the hand. Her face is of the color of gold of ten touch, her hair is like the wavy shoots of the Areca palm, her neck has a triple row of dimples, her cheeks are like those sliced off a mango, her lips are like the fissure of pomegranate. Her voice is as sweet as Raja Donan's magic flute which gave forth the sound of twelve instruments at once. The name of her lord is Khateb!"

To Wangsa there was also a maiden which such a description fitted, so he asked scornfully, "Ha! is there only one beetle and but a single flower?"

"Will ten stars equal the moon herself?" said Khateb. "You may go from Menangabon to the bounds of Siam and see all the maidens in the countries between and Casomā will outshine them all."

When a village is burned smoke will be seen, but the human heart may be in flames and no one perceive it, as every true Malay knows.

"Ha!" exclaimed Wangsa, his face as mild as a sleeping tiger, "will it not be like setting horn with ivory for the noble Khateb to wed Ulam's daughter?"

"Why do you speak foolish words? Ulam is penghulu and rich besides."

"Wangsa grinned deceptively. He was thinking it would be expedient for a certain purpose formed that minute, for Khateb's pigeon-snaring to take him as far as possible from the town. "Never mind," he said, "O Khateb, have we not sliced the heart of the buffalo together? Have we not together dipped the heart of the mite? Therefore will I tell you where many pigeons may be snared. Go to the Poko Hantu (haunted tree) that stands at the meeting of the ways called Jalen Bezar and Jalen Panjang, cross the padi fields of Orang Kayu, pass on through the secondary forest growth to the boundary of the primeval forest. There the pigeons fly in flocks so thick you cannot see the sky. Perhaps the noble Khateb has not time to go so far. Perhaps the wedding is this afternoon?"

"*Tidak* not so. It is day after to-morrow. The Poko

Hantu is not so far. Perhaps I will go. *Tabek*." He went on cheerily repeating the favorite pigeon-snaring charm:

"Caller, bamboo caller!
Caller of the wild doves,
Over the seven valleys and the seven knolls,
Re-echo the voice of my decoy."

Wangsa's little evil eyes looked maledictions on his back, and his lips pronounced them.

"May all your snares be destroyed by the Hantu Songei, who leans against the wild areca palm his head and arms that have no body beneath to support them. May his long nose and wide set eyes scare away the pigeons. May the Spectre Huntsman kick you and end your swine's life." Then he proceeded straight to Yum Lee's shop and bought the *baju* described by Khateb so glowingly.

"It is not always the man who plants the cocoanut who eats its meat," he said as he arrayed himself in it. He then donned a pair of trousers of an azure color, put on his head a scarlet fez embroidered in gold, knotted a sarong of rainbow plaid around his waist, and then sallied forth in the direction of the campong in which Casoma lived. This was in a cocoanut grove down by the seashore and was made up of about a dozen houses built of bamboo strips laced together with rattan, thatched with *atop*, with doors and window screens of *kajang*. Penghulu Ulam's house was distinguished from his people's only by size, being slightly larger. A few steps from the group of houses was a little mosque. The whole was mean and squalid in appearance as all Malay villages are. Nevertheless the noble overshadowing palms, and the winding, smooth strip of sea reflecting the blue sky and white tumuli of clouds, imparted to the scene a primitive dignity of its own. The atmosphere of pastoral peace hanging over it accentuated the impression. At this hour of the morning, it being between nine and ten o'clock, the laughs of a group of naked brown boys playing "*champah bunga sa'blah*" (throwing the flower across) were the only loud sounds to be heard. It was a peace like that wonderful calm of all the Orient, impressive but delusive, for it may be turned into an uproar in the twinkling of an eye.

Two women who sat in the doorway of the first house, decorating a pair of slippers with bright beads and chatting

softly grew silent as a gorgeous figure swaggered up the beach.

"It is the *orang laut* Wangsa," said one. Look how he sways about like a *sepat* fish under a mangrove root. Why does he come here?"

The boys stopped their game to stare at him. At one door front a withered old man platting creels of thin strips of bamboo, gazed at the red purple *baju* with dim bleared eyes and began to mutter "Allah, all merciful, compassionate," thinking he saw the apparition of one of the Rajas that illumine the bombastic Malay annals. A young lad half-way up the tall, slim shaft of a cocoanut tree, with his red sarong tucked about his waist for easier climbing, paused, and hung there like a big tropic insect to see the wonder pass. At one side of his house Ulam, in a dingy plaid sarong, a dirty white *baju* and grass slippers, was engaged in picking the eyes from a gadfly that he had just found biting the buffalo attached to a stake nearby. Adah, his wife, was spreading out on banana leaves a lot of vile odored fish to dry in the sun. Casoma sat in the doorway counting over again the forty scales on the feet of the pet dove sent her by Khateb the day before, and congratulating herself on such a lucky possession. As Wangsa approached and saluted Ulam, she went inside, as etiquette demanded, and satisfied her curiosity by peering through the window with the dove perched on her shoulder. Wangsa's colloquy with Ulam was brief and he suddenly dashed into the house, seized Casoma by the hair and waved his gleaming kris above her. The frightened dove moaning flew to the top of the window. A setting hen fluttered wildly from her nest in the corner, her loud cacklings mingling with the screams of the girl. Old Adah upset her fish jar in her excitement, shrieked, and tossed her arms about like Hantu Ribut, the Malay storm fiend. Ulam's gadfly escaped with one eye still left for further bloody spoils. The creel, the slippers were thrown aside, the cocoanuts were left ungathered; drowsy figures emerged from doorways, up from the sea came others dripping from the interrupted bath and in an instant a clamorous, gesticulating throng was before the door.

"It is the "panjut ankara" (marriage by violence), said the old creel platter.

"He must have much money to try to make Ulam give him Casoma this way," said a woman.

"What need of money with a strong arm? He will kill her if any dares molest him."

"He is a brave fellow," said another.

Wangsa was trying to quiet the frightened girl. "Palm blossom, tremble not. If they come not near, my kris will not hurt you."

The girl did not find this reassuring, for she continued to tremble.

"Your father will soon accept the money I offer, which is twice the marriage fee, and give you to me. Therefore be patient, little dove."

"I do not want you for my house ladder. Division was fixed between you and me by Adam," said the girl, gaining courage.

"'Tis not so, pigeon, we shall be like two kli fish in one hole. Moreover I am rich; you shall have silk scarfs for your head, silk sarongs and anklets and wristlets of gold in abundance."

"What good to sit on a gold cushion with an unquiet mind?" answered Casoma scornfully.

"Bamboo Princess," said the pirate, keeping a watchful eye on the door, "your forehead is like the one day old moon, your brows are arched like the fighting cock's spurs, your nose is like an opening jasmine bud. Can such a beautiful maid have an unquiet mind?"

"You have sugar cane planted on your lips, but your heart is like the poisonous tuba root."

"No matter what you say, you will have to be my wife."

"When a cat wears shoes, and an Englishman turns Mohammedan that will happen. There is one who will overcome you with his kris that never fails."

"When the corpse in the grave shall speak, not before, shall I be destroyed by any beast or other son of the human race;" and enraged by her allusion to Khateb and the magic kris he jerked her hair viciously. "Wow," she screamed; "Wow," screamed all the women in sympathy and there was a stir among the men handling their weapons, as when in the forest the Malay lord of the winds lets down his long and flowing locks. But not more, for the threatening figure whose eyes darted lightning debarred them. Then they all

began to look around for Ulam, whom they had forgotten in their absorption in the two principal actors.

"There he is," spake a woman, "turning about like a worm in the sun under that cocoanut tree."

"Or like a chicken lost from its mother," laughed her companion.

"So," said the old creel platter, "what can he do? Reject him and his father dies, accept him and his mother dies. If he gives the girl to Wangsa he will have to pay the kris of Khateb. If he does not give Wangsa the girl he will kill her."

The old man's explanation of Ulam's dilemma was true. Even were the kris of Khateb not to be reckoned with, he would rather give his daughter to the crocodiles than to Wangsa and cause the English to doubt a scarcely yet proven acceptance of their ideals of law. What to do he knew not. He wandered up and down under the cocoanut trees to the beach and back, up the grove to the little mosque, and returning, went over it all again. One by one the people left, from time to time they returned, singly or in pairs, looking in at the crouching girl and the man holding her hair, his kris in hand, his beady eyes glaring wickedly, and seeing themselves always powerless went away sadly. Runners were sent to the forest for Khateb, the people being confident that he would devise some stratagem for the release of the girl. But he had been diverted from his intended snaring ground by Wangsa's wily suggestion and no one thought of the neighborhood of the roads Panjang and Besar.

Adah spent most of the day making vows and praying at a nearby shrine of rocks under which a saint's leg was buried. She went to the door occasionally to see if her devotions had been effectual. Finding the operations of the saint's leg too slow for her patience, she appeared before Wangsa in the afternoon bearing him food. In a wheedling voice she besought him to eat, saying, "The token of friendship is to eat together. Here is a bunch of plantains and a pot of milk." Wangsa, seeing through the device, angrily bade her give the food to the girl, and Casoma, whose spirit had begun to faint like a weatherbeaten prau at sea, ate the bananas and contrived to spill the drugged milk through the slits in the floor.

At last as the twilight fell Wangsa began to look for victory, for he saw Adah expostulating with Ulam under the trees.

It was then that defeat came in the person of the ancient crone, Wan Ampu. She was withered and bent, and her eyes had the soft, foolish look of the old that often hides a world of cunning. She was a cousin of his mother, and she brought him a curry for which she was famous. There was a heap of saffron rice, curry of tender white prawns and sambals of dried fish, chutney, onions, duck eggs, roes, cucumbers, cocoanut, pineapples, young bamboo shoots, bananas, capsicum, waringa pods, chilies, and others to the number of forty.

"Eat, my son," she said, how shall your strength hold out if you do not eat? 'Tis your mother brings you food."

Like Esau, of whom he never heard, he ate of his favorite dish.

"This is the way the shrewd ever devours the dull," said the old dame as Wangsa fell asleep. And now came Khateb breathless with haste, his face a thundercloud.

When Wangsa awoke he was all alone. He sat up looking about and grimacing like a cat that has eaten hair. He felt for his kris. It was gone. The red and purple baju also had been removed from his body. Not a sound was heard save the lapping of the water on the beach, the sigh of the wind through the cocoanut fronds, the clucking of two or three fowls busy in a precarious search for food in the sandy earth. He went outside. The *campong* was deserted. He saw that it was late in the afternoon. He had eaten the curry at twilight, so he knew that he had slept all night and thus far into the next day. With sullen face he stalked away and entering the Street of Shops procured another kris and refreshed himself at a stall with a meal of rotten fish, rice and jackfruit as evil in odor as the fish. Above the street noises of carts and men there came from a distance the sound of triangle, drum and gong. He went in the direction of the music drawn as by invisible hands and soon discovered that it came from the palace of Dato Amurel, Khateb's father. He was now near enough to recognize the henna staining tune played at Malay weddings and he was already *sakit hati* (heart sick) before the armed guards at the gate warned him back.

"What marriage is it?" he asked looking as amiable as he could under the circumstances. The guards grinned at him derisively.

"Khateb and Casoma," they answered.

He stood a moment, blinking at the guards, who stared back all alert. Then, with one futile glance at the ten-foot palisades surrounding the palace of boards and thatch, he turned with his head high, his breast puffed out, and strutted down the road, stretching his short legs with difficulty into the long stride called "planting beans." One of the guards called out to him mockingly, "What is the use of the peacock strutting in the jungle?" Even then his haughty step did not falter. Not of Wangsa, the terrible *orang laut*, should the people say he slunk away like a dog with a sore head. Like a grotesque parrot vainly trying to soar against the wind he passed out of sight. Shortly after word came to the Dato that Wangsa and his prau had gone up the coast after a Chinaman's junk. On the contrary, he was hiding, waiting for the public appearance of his rival and devising stratagems by which he might get possession of the magic kris. He soon found a friend who offered to borrow Khateb's kris on the first opportunity and turn it over to himself in consideration for the greater part of his recently acquired wealth. Wangsa felt no sacrifice too great that promised to result in the downfall of his enemy and, the contract concluded, proceeded to divert himself in the interim with cock-fighting. But the fates were against him.

The next day the Sultan Abdul Samad Ibrahim Iskander Khan sent word to Khateb that the first bearer of the Royal Cuspidor had been eaten by a crocodile while at the bath, that the second and third had each in turn been seized with an illness, and that it behooved him to return lest a similar illness befall him. At the same time as a mark of special favor he sent the Royal Silk Umbrella, fan and two of the royal spears to accompany Khateb and his bride to the palace. The illness of his two associates being that of extreme decapitation, Khateb stood not on the order of his going.

It was a gorgeous procession that started on its way to the royal palace, accompanied by the clash of instruments and chantings from the Koran. Casoma was placed in a rattan chair borne by four young men and Khateb walked beside it. Before him went two men bearing the royal spears. By his side walked the man bearing the royal umbrella of shining yellow silk. Behind came one with the royal fan, a gigantic palm leaf and stalk, its natural tan hue set off by mystical

ornamentation in yellow and dark purple, its border of isinglass sparkling in the sun. Then came the musicians, relatives and friends of the pair in a long train. Red sarongs, sarongs of green and gold, of purple, brown and white, of orange and blue plaids worn by both sexes, the blue and scarlet fezes of the men, the gauzy pink and white head scarfs of the women, threw the procession into bold relief as it wound down the green-bordered road into the dingy street of shops. Here the crash of gong, the rattle of tabor and drum, the shrieking of fifes were loudest. The air was heavy with the noise, and silenced were the pounding of fish in the mortar, the threshing of rice, the chatter of traders at the stalls, the creaking of two-wheeled bullock carts, the tinklings from the shops of the workers in brass, and even the hoarse voice of the krismaker's forge was no longer heard. All along the route people paused in their work or roused themselves from dreamy meditation to watch the procession. One group, however, was unconscious of its passage. In a space back of the shops a dozen Malays and Chinamen were absorbed watching a fight between two red barnyard cocks. Deeply engrossed, and the most excited of them all, was Wangsa. He had lost heavily on preceding fights and had staked his remaining all on this, hoping to regain his loss. If he should not he would be left without means to reward his friend for borrowing the magic kris. It was now the eighth round of the fight, both birds were bloody, and one had an eye out. This was his opponent's cock and it seemed to Wangsa that his own must soon win. When it suddenly reared its back feather and ran away, in his rage he picked up a potsherd and threw it with such force that the poor bird was killed. Then he dashed through the shop to the front and heard for the first time the noise of the bridal train, now almost passed. He looked down the street; saw the royal spears, umbrella and fan, the gold and tinsel bride's coiffure of Casoma, and Khateb wearing the red purple, gold-embroidered silk baju. With a wild yell he dashed upon the nearest followers, slashing right and left with his kris. The crash of the instruments grew still before the awful cry, Amok! amok! The procession scattered like ants before a tamanoir, and shrieks and groans arose on all sides. Men who turned at bay, and with courageous strokes attempted to stop the murderer, were stabbed and hurled down by his impetuous rush. Un-

fortunates without agility, old women too frightened to move, young children who in helpless confusion ran right and left, sometimes back on the crazed brute's track—all went down bleeding and screaming. At the head of the train the bearers of the royal appurtenances and of Casoma's chair threw down their burdens and took refuge behind shop doors and trees.

Casoma ran behind a fish stall over which she peered anxiously at her bridegroom left standing alone in the middle of the road. The amoker, shouting frenziedly from the Koran, grew suddenly silent as he saw awaiting him his rival, as still and immovable as an image of stone. A rage too deep for any voice but that of the dripping kris seized him, and with it came a strength like the fury of a maddened buffalo. Khateb saw that he would be as likely to withstand the impact of that headlong rush as a young merunti tree a collision with the dragon of the landslip on his way to the sea. He quickly resolved what to do and made a great vow.

"If I fail," said he, "may my fate be that of the cocoanut shell which holds water when turned up and earth when turned down. May I descend into the valleys and get no water and go up into the mountains and get no wind. May I be like a tree with no shoots above and no roots below and of which the trunk has been bored by insects." Thus he renounced both ancestors and descendants, as terrible a thing for an Asiatic as for a Christian to deny the Christ. Then he raised his kris, "Betuah," the sacred weapon of his ancestors, and flashing it thrice in air before the wild eyes of the oncoming amoker, cast it at his feet. And lo, a miracle! At the sight of the famous weapon Wangsa stopped short, like a demon touched with holy water. There at his feet it lay, the dreadful, the beautiful! "Betuah," charmed, invulnerable! He glanced at Khateb. It was six paces off and his enemy without his magic kris. So! both were his own! He stooped to pick up the slender, undulating blade where it lay, a gem-like blue against the yellow dust. Then it was that Khateb, who had been standing all the while as taut as a bent bow, with one swift tiger-like leap, pounced upon him, driving into the rounded back a second kris which had been concealed in the folds of his sarong, and Wangsa, the terrible, keeled over dead, as harmless evermore as a dog empaled by a palm-thatch needle.



MARCEL and Others:

A Sketch of a French
Country House, by Charles
Oliver*



MARCEL meets me at the station with a wheelbarrow—for the transport of my luggage, not myself. I always say to myself as the train draws up, "Coach, carriage, wheelbarrow?" For my friend Monsieur de Fayel is a little variable in these matters.

We load up the barrow with my belongings, and start for the château. The tall iron gates of the park open almost on to the booking-office of the diminutive station, which is also a post office—of such an unpretentious nature that we buy stamps out of one of the station-master's pockets and post our letters in another. When we reach the bridge over the little river I invite Marcel to stop and try some English tobacco. He makes himself a cigarette, and sits down on my portman-teau, blowing his smoke into the face of a Diana who guards the spot.

Things wore a gloomy aspect for him just now. He has asked Madame, it appears, for leave to go into Paris more often than she likes. At last she has struck. "Figure to yourself, Monsieur," says Marcel, "that which Madame has come from saying to me: 'Your uncle that you wish to go to see all the days at Paris, Marcel, is it that he wears petticoats?' Oh, Monsieur, it is frightful; it is the devil!"

We smoke on in silence. The tall grasses rustle about the marble feet of Diana and the trout grab lazily at the struggling flies. All is peace, except in the soul of Marcel. "Is it not ravishing," I suggest, "under these waving trees, by this

*From The Gentleman's Magazine.

running stream? Who would be in Paris? Think of the noise and glare and dust! Live the country!"

"Oh, no, Monsieur; live Paris! There one finds the music, of the gaiety, of the conversation, of the distractions; here one works, works; always of the labor; nothing of theatres, of friends, of——"

"Uncles?" I suggest.

Marcel slowly declines one eyelid, and the corners of his mouth elevate themselves into rather a sour smile. We understand one another. "And again, Monsieur, regard here. I was going all the Tuesdays and Fridays of the evening into the village, where one gives lessons of the dance and of the deportment. But now Monsieur has bought himself a dog, large and black and savage, which has eaten already two Messieurs who trespass. What wish you? If I go to the course as before, Porthos devours me the legs. Therefore I rest at the house."

I can say nothing comforting. If Porthos does not leave Marcel a leg to stand on, it will be no good his learning to waltz. Deportment without legs is a farce. Perhaps we can tame Porthos, or ensure his being chained up a little longer in the evenings.

"Oh, Monsieur," breaks out Marcel, "the country, how I detest it! Yes, Monsieur, I repeat—detest it! The songs of the little birds, they pierce me the ears and make me weep of *ennui*, and the smell of the hay makes me to vomit. Yes, Monsieur, I sit alone in my room, and I write, always I write——"

"To your uncle?"

With the same gentle wink and bitter smile Marcel wheels my luggage away. I have no doubt that within a mile of the ugly Eiffel Tower, which he can see as he writes, always writes, there dwells, unconscious of the strange effect of hay upon his liver, an Eve who could make this a paradise for poor Marcel.

Monsieur de Fayel hails me from the *embarcadere* by the lake, where he is fixing up some Venetian lamps, his latest and best-loved treasure. He appears from amid the bulrushes like a middle-aged infant Moses with a great many wisps of dank weed about his figure. He invites me to make with him a safe and inglorious voyage of some hundred yards

in a little tub, painted, it would seem, to represent a blanc-mange.

"It is necessary that the boat looks very beautiful from the windows of the château," he observes, as he perspires at the oars with the sort of stroke which condenses into three inches the work that should be spread out over three feet, with much displacement of water and little of our raft. We are, owing to imperfect balancing, very much down by the stern and our bows point hopefully to heaven. I am sure we cannot look beautiful from the château or any other point of view, more especially as we are both of a figure more solid than elegant.

The coachman, the second coachman, the stable-boy, the gardener, the under-gardener, the gamekeeper, the bailiff, and the "second man" are all engaged on the hay. Hence the barrow at the station. The butler and the peacock grace the terrace. The coachman steps respectfully to the edge of the lake. "Pardon, Monsieur. Is it that Monsieur knows that the tails of his coat float on the waves there behind?" That is the finishing stroke to any idea of beauty about us.

Madame de Fayel is waiting to welcome our errant bark. We sit down in a shrine of Flora at the end of a long avenue of poplars. It is a charming spot, and I always feel that we ought to be highly romantic in it. We should be Roman or Greek philosophers, shepherds and shepherdesses, or lords and ladies of the Grand Monarque's days, with costume and conversation to match. But we wear, alas! modern clothes, and we talk about bedspreads.

Madame de Fayel's friend from New York joins us. She is frank of manner, and in her speech always *sans peur*, and often *sans reproche*. "You must do somethin' to that stoopid old Gaston," she says to our host; "he looks as if he had been dug up. He gives me a pain in the stomach." Monsieur de Fayel promises to dig Gaston in again, if that will allay the internal pangs of the New York friend.

The bell clangs for *déjeuner*, and we make our way up to the house. My host pours his troubles into my sympathetic ear. He is, it appears, the victim of two invasions: one of electricians, the other of ants. His wrath is such that he forgets to discriminate. "I assure you, my friend, that they are in all the places. I go to repose myself in my study in the after-mid-days, and there see these frightful beasts! I raise

myself in the mornings and behold me covered of them!" The poor Monsieur!

Marcel waits at table, splendid but gloomy. Nothing cheers him. The cork of a bottle on the sideboard bursts its moorings and lights gracefully on his head. The children shriek with joy, but Marcel is as solemn and unmoved as if it always rained corks in his part of the world. A (purely accidental) reference on my part to dancing-lessons causes him to turn a beautiful crimson and to fix his eye sternly on a particular corner of the ceiling. He takes his revenge by neglecting me in the ministration of wine and disregarding my signal for bread.

We have coffee and strawberries in a garden that is the private domain of our hostess and can only be got at through her boudoir. Here is a splashing fountain, a *baigneuse* disdainful of a bathing costume, a sheltering trellis clambered over by beautiful creepers, circular benches and recesses, and, behind all, roses and ever roses, in terrace above terrace. A place to dream in. A place to be intellectual and refined in. The drawl of the Yankee lady rises on the fragrant air. "No; no strawberries for me, dear. They make me itch so."

Monsieur the Curé comes to dinner in the evening. He is very small and shiny and black. Except for his red face, indeed, and his tonsure he is nearly all black: black hair, black soutane, black bands outlined in violet, and black gloves. Madame de Fayel, who is large, tucks him under her arm and sweeps him off across the hall to the dining-room. I often wish we could have dinner in the cold, severe hall, with its vaulted roof and quaintly carved beasts, its great picture of some ancestor in lace and satin, and its echoes. But perhaps it would not do. It is, on the whole, better to dream that you feed in marble halls than actually do so. Monseieur the Curé speaks English for my benefit. "Madame will pardon me that I tell Monsieur of my voyage to London. I am arrived; there are two hours in your grand metropolis, when figure my horror of finding that my—Madame will pardon me?—that my pantaloons is tore. What to do? I demand to a gendarme, and he has indicated to me a magazine of the garments. I am entered; an amiable Monsieur demands that which I seek. 'Pardon, Monsieur,' I say, 'my pantaloons is broke; give me another.'"

The American friend, *à propos* of the flies that Paris has

in all her quarters these hot days, tells us how she waved her parasol at what appeared to be a raspberry tart, and it became a custard. She then proceeds to a little disquisition on appendicitis, and its utility as a means of introduction into high society.

Marcel visits me the last thing at night and brings me some iced water. This is a vain compliment, as it makes my tooth ache—the tooth on which, literally, everything depends. The nightingales and crickets bring the tears to the eyes of Marcel. And yet he hails from Savoy, and loves to tell me of his country—its rocks and torrents and snows. I suppose they have nightingales there too; I hope not crickets.

I ask him if I can have breakfast with the children. "Is it that it is defended from having the little breakfast there below with the infants?" "My God, Monsieur! why should it then be defended from having the little breakfast where one wishes?" I like breakfasting with the children, because they are nicer then than any other time. Later on in the day, when lessons have taken off the edge of the pleasure of life, they get a little cross. But in the early morning chocolates in the form of dominoes appeal to them very strongly, and often prove the keys which unlock a good many valuable secrets, such as the name and age of the chicken that died last night, the exact stage of education of the coachman's second boy, and so on.

Marcel tells me of his past experience and his ambitions for the future. They are both entirely laudable and circumscribed. If he can learn English he will go to New York—as a temporary measure I suppose, for I am sure he can never be happy far from the Eiffel Tower. "Ah, quel bonheur! if he should be able to apprehend the English!" I make a suggestion to him that I shall give him lessons. The idea is hailed with joy, and he listens now with greater equanimity to the varied notes that rise to our ears as we lean at the open window. Every morning, therefore, he comes to my room, *très matinal*, with an offering of a cup of tea in one hand and a grammar in the other. We plod with heavy breathings and wriggles from "the cat is not Pat, but Pat is fat," and such tongue-tying contraptions, to "I love," "thou lovest," &c., and so soar to empyrean heights.

The "second man" is an Italian, an enthusiast for his own language, "Ah, Monsieur," he says to me in the inter-

vals of polishing the gallery floors with one foot in an un-gainly shuffle, "ours is the language by excellence. French is the language of Courts; Castilian of compliments. Russian is bow-wow. But Italian, it is the language of science, of poetry, of music; it is the language of the angels; it is the language of heaven." I sincerely hope it is not the last, for, if it is, about thirty-nine fortieths of the blessed will be reduced to silence.

Marcel is, it appears, by way of being an artist, and in a moment of confidence he brings me some of his work to criticise. I am sorry, for criticism is, honestly, all I have to offer. I could point out to him that châteaux, farms and churches are not built of yellow mud and furnished with tightly closed blue shutters; that though swallows in flight are easy to picture, they are not, therefore, the only living things in this world; that roses do not grow on cactuses, and, if they did, would not, I take it, be pink with white trimmings and as large as cartwheels; and that the best way of getting to the other side of a cedar forest is by walking through it, and not by means of a bridge. But I do not wish to hurt his feelings too much, so I merely show him a little thing of my own. From that moment he abjures art.

One morning he comes to my room with mingled joy and regret on his honest face. Madame has given him *vacances* of a month, and to-morrow he will go to Chambéry. Thanks, a thousand thanks, to Monsieur of all his amiability, "Pas de quoi, mon ami." Marcel will make himself the honor of writing to Monsieur in English well understood. Monsieur is enchanted. He supposes that Marcel will visit his uncle *en route*; will he convey Monsieur's respectful salutations to her?

And so I am relegated to the care of a "locum," who is very deaf and quite dumb. At the end of three weeks Madame de Fayel receives his respectful resignation from Marcel; and by the same post I get his first, and probably last, letter in English:—

"Mister,—Behold me arriven to home, and see me surrounded of my dogs, my cats, my pignons, and my father. I have made a voyage very excellent. There is comed here an foreign mister, which have see nof the snow not before. He run at it, kick up any, eat any, and put any in his poche. Alas! what damage! He is fallen of the mountain and is slayed.

I have writed to Madame, and I have made to her my demission. For there has much of the work in Chambéry, and I can to gain fourty francs by week. Wherefore then go to New York, and wherefore to come again to the house of Madame? Mister, I thank you very well of all your pains. You see how I have did very grand progress. Agree my respectuous sentiments.

MARCEL."

I think from the look of it that Marcel has found another uncle at Chambéry.





PORTSMOUTH Point Romance: An Old-Time Sea Story, by Walter Jeffery *

DICK HOLDING, as he tore down Smock Alley to his boat, thought bitterly on certain things just said to him. 'It's true I'm a rough feller, an' 'e, wi' 'is schoolin' and shore-goin' ways, is more fit for the daughter o' the owner; but all the same, I'm right: a cruise in a man-o'-war 'ud do 'im a deal o' good. Yet, because I'm a fool, I'll 'ave to go on board that frigate an' take 'im off some'ow. They ain't got no right to press 'im; but right don't trouble 'em when they want men. Yet that ain't the p'int. If they carries 'im off that gal will blame me for it.'

The cool way in which he had heard the news of Preston's seizure by the pressgang had given offence to the girl, and she had told him to his face that he was coarse and vulgar, and jealous of the other's superior education.

The idea of being jealous! Why, hadn't he the greatest contempt for the young fool's book-knowledge, and was not Preston's ignorance of sailing a constant trouble to him? But it would have been all the better to have known a little—enough, for instance, to read handwriting. This he thought as he stepped into the dingy, and the boy George shipped the oar and sculled him off to the brig.

When they came alongside he yelled for "another 'and in the boat," while he sat and waited until one of the sailors climbed over the brig's side, grumbling at being disturbed just as the men were going to supper in the forecastle. "Ship that rudder, get two oars, an' give way. Stop a minute, you boy; come aft and steer. I'll take yer oar. There's a long pull ahead o' us, an' it looks as if it 'ud blow afore long."

It was a long and tedious pull from where the brig was lying off the Camber to the *Aladdin* riding at Spithead, and

*From Chambers's Journal.

at every stroke of his oar Holding pulled the boat's head half-round, though the boy kept the rudder hard against him. Before their boat reached the *Aladdin's* side the sun had set some time; but by the twilight of the summer's evening Holding's seaman's eyes told him that the frigate was on the point of sailing. Her boatbooms were rigged and boats hoisted, and all her sails loosed ready for sheeting home; while the scraping of a fiddle and the regular tramp round the capstan were sounds that Holding knew meant that the anchor would soon be weighed.

The arrival alongside of the *Extenuate's* dingy created some little sensation, the men on the frigate's deck wondering if the rowers, breathless from their hard pull, had brought with them some message which would delay the ship, and a row of heads peered curiously over the hammock-nettings to listen for the reply to the lieutenant's hail: "Boat ahoy! what do you want?"

"The *Extenuate's* boat. Tell your captain that Holding, master o' the brig, wants to see 'im; an' pass me a line for the boat."

"All right; we'll lower a ladder for you in a minute if you want to come aboard."

When Holding, disdaining a ladder, climbed the ship's side by the aid of a rope, he was met at the break of the poop by the captain with the question, "Well, sir, what brings you off like this at the last moment? Something wrong with your crew: a mutiny? There are men-o'-war lying handier to you than I am."

"No, sir; my men are all right. That's not what I am 'ere for. I am come for my mate."

"Your mate? Oh! ah yes, the young fellow my second lieutenant caught this afternoon. And what do you want with him?"

"Want wi' 'im? I want to take him back to the brig. You surely won't seize 'im in that fashion?"

"My good man, you know very well that we shall take him, though he seems a very impudent fellow, and will need a lot of breaking in; yet the service must be manned, you know, and the press is the fashion we have of manning it."

"But, sir, 'e is my only mate, an' I can't take my vessel to sea without 'im. The law says you can't do it."

"Whatever the law says, I *have* done it. Your vessel is in port; get another mate."

"Look 'ere, captain"—Holding came up closer to the other and spoke gently and persuasively—"ye are a young man an' a good-lookin' feller, an' I'll be bound that some young lady is at 'ome waitin' for ye to splice 'er. Now, I put it to ye: 'ow would ye like to be served this way?"

"Meanin' that this mate of yours is leaving behind him Alderman Tuffin's daughter, Ellen, the good-looking girl with the dark eyes—eh?"

"Meanin' 'er, captain. She was wi' 'im when yer men took 'im, an' she says she was insulted by yer sailors, which I 'ad no time to 'ear the rights o'; but I suppose that was only 'er fancy, not understandin' the ways o' seamen."

"Well, Mr. Holding, you go back to that young lady and tell her that she is quite mistaken; I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world. Besides, I heard from the lieutenant that she fought to save him from my men, the fellow himself not showing half her spirit."

"Then ye'll let me take 'im back to 'er?"

"Indeed, I won't; it would not at all square with my duty."

"Very well, sir." Some of the officers on the lee side of the poop stepped forward hurriedly, thinking by the man's appearance and the sudden rise in the tone of his voice that he meant mischief. "Very well, captain. By the Lord! I'll 'ave the law on ye. No, ye needn't put yer 'and to yer sword. I am not fool enough to lose my temper so far as that. I know the consequences too well; but I'll go straight to the Admiral, an' see if an Englishman is to be made a slave o', an'"—

"Now, look here, my fine fellow, the anchor's apeak, and we shall be half through the Solent before you touch the beach; and even if you went to the Admiral, he would only laugh at you. I make every allowance for your anger; but I won't let you have this man, if for no other reason than for his behavior since he came on board. Why, he has been so sulky, that I have kept him in irons ever since.—Haul up that boat there. Stand by to sheet home your topsails."

"Yes, it is too late to save 'im that way: I see that clear afore me; but there is still a chance, an' if ye're a man ye'll give it to me." Holding had recovered himself, and spoke very quietly.

"Very well; out with it. What do you mean?"

"Take me instead."

"You?"

"Yes, me. I 'ave thought it all out. Preston's only been to sea about four years; I've been brought up to it. A volunteer's worth a dozen pressed men, as you know very well, an' ye'll find me willin' enough."

"Why do you make this offer? Only a fool or a madman would do it."

"Because I want to send the man back to 'is gal, an' I've got no more business wi' the brig."

"Very well; I'll take you at your word."

"Will ye write a letter for me, sir, just to tell 'em ashore w'at 'as become 'o me? I ain't no 'and at writin'."

"All right; I'll take you to my cabin directly. You shall have your way.—Hold on everything with those topsails, and pass the word for that fellow Preston to be brought to me in my cabin. Come below with me, Holding."

In the cabin the captain produced pen and paper. "Now, Holding, what do you want me to write?"

"Address the letter, if you please, sir, to Mistress Ellen Tuffin—private: 'This is to tell ye that I send back yer sweetheart'"——

"Oh, the wind's in that quarter, is it? By George! you're a generous fellow, Holding; and the other is not worth it."

"She is—she is. You write: 'Get your father to make 'im master o' the brig in my room; but get yer father to send an old sailor wi' 'im as mate, because readin' an' writin' ain't all that's wanted at sea.' 'Ave ye got that?"

"Yes, and there's a deal of sound sense in it; if the fellow's cur enough to accept the exchange I wouldn't give him command of a jolly-boat."

"Now, write this to Alderman Tuffin: 'SIR,—I 'ereby resign command o' the brig in favor o' yer nephew, Edward Preston, an' am sure 'e'll turn out a good man if ye send a sailor wi' 'im as mate. I 'ave volunteered for the frigate *Aladdin*.'"

"Very well. Now sign these. Anything more?"

"Yes, sir; give the one for Alderman Tuffin to Preston to deliver, an' give that one for the gal to me, an' send for my boy out o' the boat."

The word was passed for the *Extenuate's* boy, to whom

on arrival Holding thus delivered himself: "Now, look, Jarge, I've rope's-ended you into a smart young fellow, an' this letter I am goin' to give ye ye 'ave got to give to Mistress Ellen Tuffin wi' yer own hands w'en there's no one by. I 'ave taken it into my 'ead to go for a cruise in this ship, an' the mate's goin' to take charge o' the brig. Ye look out an' behave yerself under 'im, or w'en I come back I'll give ye a dose wi' the end o' the topsell halyards that ye won't forget in a 'urry."

"I shan't go back. I've taken it into my 'ead to go for a cruise in this frigate, too, an' I'll go wi' ye."

"Nice boy," said the frigate's skipper.

"Look 'ere, Jarge; I perticular want ye to go back, an' I give ye my word that w'en we come 'ome to Portsmouth, in w'atever ship I go in again I'll take ye wi' me."

"'Tain't fair! I can't stand that feller Preston."

"I won't argue wi' ye, my lad, though we ain't on the brig; but I'll presently give ye a very pretty rope's-endin' if ye don't get into the boat in 'alf-a-minute. Now, Jarge, come, I ask ye to do it in a friendly way."

"Very well, Capen 'Oldin'; I see w'at's up. Ye want me to look after yer interests w'ile ye are on the cruise. I'll go."

"Well done, my lad; I thought we understood one another." Then the boy left the cabin.

"Now, is there anything else, Holding?"

"No, sir."

"Well, just remain in the cabin a moment, and I'll give you a chance to see how little this fellow is worth what you are doing for him. Go aft behind my cot, where you can hear without being seen.—Marine, tell them to bring Preston here."

The word was passed along, and Preston was led into the wardroom, while Holding, farther aft in the captain's cabin, could see him through the half-open door, and could hear what was going on without being seen. He was wearing handcuffs and was hatless, clothed only in shirt and breeches. From the wound of a cutlass-hilt on his head the blood had streamed down both sides of his face, had dried there, and had clotted upon his long hair, making him ghastly to look upon.

"Well, my man, will you turn to if I take off your handcuffs?"

"No, I won't. You have dragged me here by sheer force; but you shall kill me before I'll work for you."

"You'll sing a different tune by-and-by when we rig a grating for you. Your friends ought to be glad to be rid of such a fellow."

"I have no friends or I should not be here now. You know that very well, or you would not have taken me."

Holding made a movement; but the captain, anticipating him, turned in time to wave him back.

"What about the master of the brig? He ought to know your value. Why is he not looking after you?"

"Yes, you may ask; but I know all about it. I can see through the plot. The brig's boat came alongside just now, so that Holding could get his blood-money. He is the cause of my being here. He laid the pressgang onto me. I see through it all."

"Well, my lad, you're wrong. Holding is here, and he came for a totally different purpose.—Come out, man, and speak for yourself."

Holding stepped forward eagerly. "I am come to free you, Preston," he said simply. "The captain says 'e'll take me in your place, and—"

"Of course I know very well this is only a piece of the plot. You'll take care not to lose the chance of getting me out of the way."

"I don't know what ye mean; but I swear if ye are allowed to go I'll stay."

"Now then, Preston, do you hear what Holding says? He takes your place, and you go back—to command the brig and marry the alderman's daughter.—That's what it amounts to—eh, Holding?—Here's a letter to her owner from Holding, resigning her—the brig, I mean—to you."

"Yes, sir, I believe—I 'ope—that is what will come to pass."

"Now, Preston, say the word. I want to get under sail."

"Well, Holding, if you mean it, well and good; but I suppose they're going to land you down the coast somewhere, or else make a petty officer of you. Anyhow I am glad to go, so you can take off the handcuffs as soon as you like, captain."

"You hear, Holding, what he says. For the last time, are you willing to change places?"

"Put 'im in the boat an' 'ave done wi' this, for God's sake," answered Holding. He was very pale, but he spoke firmly.

"And you, Preston; are you agreeable?"

■ "Yes, and glad to get off at the price."

"Marines, bundle him into the boat instantly.—You are a white-livered scoundrel to accept such an offer.—Get him out of the ship at once. Take that sailor out of the boat, and let the wretch get ashore as best he can."

Holding interposed. "For the sake of the boy, captain, give him the sailor. 'E's an old man, an' little use on a king's ship."

"Very well, Holding, for the sake of the boy, and more for your sake—for you're a fine fellow—I'll let your seaman go; but, by George! I'd like to drown that cur."

There was no time for further talk, for the captain ran on deck, ordering as he went that Holding should be sent forward, and that the boat with those to go ashore should be cast off.

"Go for'ard, Holding, to the fo'c'sle-head and let's see how you shape," said the first lieutenant; "unless you have any clothes in the boat you want to get out of her," he added.

"Clothes, sir!" Holding smiled. "I didn't bargain for the cruise when I came off. I've nothing but what I stand upright in; but I'll wave my boat good-bye if you've no objections."

"Go ahead, then, and be quick about it.—Now, men, heave away the capstan; sheet home the topsails."

The fiddle struck up again, and the men at the capstan resumed their tramp in step with the music; the anchor, already under foot, broke ground; the sail-trimmers manned the topsail sheets and halyards; the great canvas sails bellied out and flapped noiselessly in the strong breeze as the wind filled them; and Holding, running to the ship's side, had only time to wave his hand to those in the dingy as it dropped astern, until those in her were lost to his view, and the boat became a tiny, shapeless black object on the white crests of the choppy sea.

"Good-bye, Jarge; good-bye, Preston. Remember me to them at home.—Don't forget the letter, my lad. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Capen 'Oldin'," came the voice of the boy across the water; but Preston bent to his oar and made no

answer—never even looked back towards the dark shadow of the man at the bulwarks, for another moment visible to the boy, then lost among the crowd of moving figures on the deck of the frigate.

Then those in the boat gave way with a will and pulled hard to make the smooth water of the harbor. As they neared its mouth they paused for a moment from their rowing to gain breath, and looked out toward Spithead. The moon, now high in the heavens, had come out from behind a bank of clouds, and it showed the white canvas and dark, low hull of the frigate just clearing the tail of the Motherbank as she ran before a strong, fair wind, leaving a white glitter in the sheen of light a-wake that marked the rate at which she was traveling.

Preston, not knowing that the Tuffin family were anxiously waiting up to hear from Holding the result of his mission, went below to his berth; while the boy, dog-tired after his hard day, made fast the boat and crawled into his bunk in the forecastle, when he would instantly have fallen asleep but for the old sailor.

"This 'ere's a rum go. W'at's the meanin' o' it all?" he asked. "Ye was in the wardroom, an' 'eard what was goin' on. W'at's the game?"

"Ye'll knowfast enough in the mornin', w'en Capen Preston rouses ye roun' the deck; but ye doon't know w't a narrer squeak ye 'ad o' sailin' in the frigate."

"W'at d'ye mean, ye sassy young cub?"

"Never ye mind; I don't carry yarns from aft for'ard any more'n I carry 'em from for'ard aft, and I shan't say nothin' about it. So ye go to sleep."

Preston, at his end of the vessel, could not sleep. He lay and built castles in the air, speculating upon the near fulfillment of his hopes and ambitions, and seeing ahead a wedding at St. Thomas's or Kensington, with an alderman to give the bride away—a wedding in style befitting the genteel young master of the favorite brig *Extenuate* and the well-to-do and beautiful daughter of the brig's owner.

At daybreak he was out early, and had the crew turned to washing the brig's deck, determined to begin well by having his vessel in good order. Then the dingy was hauled up, and Preston, in his best clothes, with—but for the scar

on his head—no trace of the adventures of the day before, was sculled to the Sally Port by the boy.

"You take the boat back, and the boatswain will keep you going till I want her again."

"Please, I'm goin' to make 'er fast. I've got to go up to Mr. Tuffin's."

"You've got to go to Mr. Tuffin's? Who says so? Just remember I'm your master now."

"Please, sir, Mistress Ellen said I was to be sure an' see 'er first thing when I could get ashore."

"What does she want you for?"

"I think it's to run a' errand for 'er, sir."

"Oh, well, you can walk up behind me."

George Tinkle then made the boat fast and solemnly fell into the rear of his superior officer; but the march up to Mr. Tuffin's shipchandlery would have been more dignified if the boy had not varied his part in it with an occasional step-dance on the cobble-stones and with derisive gestures at the back of the mate, making great fun for the passers-by.

As soon as they entered the shop the girl caught sight of Preston, and in great excitement called out, "He has come back; they have let him go. Thank God!" She held out both hands to him. "I was sure you would escape."

"Yes, here I am. It's all right."

"Well, Ned," said his uncle, "so they let you go, then? How did Holding manage it?"

"I'll tell you all about it directly, uncle."

"Come in, come in. You're just in time for breakfast. Where did you leave Holding?"

"Never mind Holding, father. I've no doubt he is on board the brig."

"But I do mind Holding, Ellen. I want him to have breakfast with us."

"Oh, bother! We have Ned back, and I suppose he'll have to go to work directly.—Tell us how you got away."

"I have a letter for you, uncle, from the skipper which will explain everything. Here it is." Preston, handing the note to Tuffin, took his seat at the table. Then the boy, who was quite overlooked in the excitement, caught Ellen by the skirt. She turned, and he pushed a piece of paper into her hand, and gave her a look which plainly meant, "This is between you and me and him, you know."

The girl thought this was some plan of Preston's to communicate with her secretly, and took the note, smiling at George a recognition of his diplomacy as the boy slipped out of the room and went back to the boat.

Then she was startled by an exclamation from her father.

"Good heavens! the man's mad. Why, he's gone off in the *Aladdin*—actually been fool enough to change places with Ned here.—Why, Edward, what does it mean?"

Ellen tore open her note and hastily looked through it. "Here, she said, 'I too have a note from Richard Holding. It is true he has gone in the frigate. This was not intended for you; but read it, father.'"

Preston looked curiously from one to the other of them, and stopped in the act of eating breakfast-bacon. Presently he said, "It seems easy enough to understand. Holding has changed places with me."

"Richard Holding may be mad, but he's a noble fellow," Ellen said as she got up from the table and moved away to the other side of the room.

"Yes, it was lucky for me to get the chance—wasn't it, Ellen? But then, you know that Holding was a rough sort of man, and could scarcely read or write. I suppose he liked the idea of a cruise in the frigate. Don't you think so?"

The girl was standing with her back to him, looking out of the window, and she replied without turning round, her voice sounding strange to him, "I don't know how such as you may think of it; but I understand. I doubted the evidences of my senses yesterday when the pressgang attacked us; but my eyes are opened now."

"It was most infernally foolish," said the alderman. "Who is looking after the brig?"

"Oh, she's all right, uncle. I slept on board last night. I got back as soon as I had seen the frigate under way."

"Upon my word, you take things easy. Why, we sat up the best part of the night waiting for Holding to return and bring us news of you, while you were snoring comfortably in your bed."

"I am very sorry; but how was I to know? He ought to have told me. But Holding was always slow-witted."

"He has been quick enough in perpetrating this folly. Goodness knows for how long the man will be away. The

frigate sailed under sealed orders, and I suppose he had nothing but what he stood upright in."

"Of course not; that's how I was. I had nothing either, and he had to go as he was, or not at all."

"It's not necessary to talk any more about it," said Ellen. "Holding's note to me is enough, and I can see clearly what it means."

"What can Holding have to say to you, Ellen? And how did you get a letter?"

"A messenger gave it to me, and Holding wrote because, I suppose, he had something to say. You can see the letter. My father will, I have no doubt, show it to you."

The girl turned suddenly from the window, and looked at her cousin in a fashion that made him fidget uneasily upon his chair; then she gathered her skirts about her and walked out of the room.

"I can't make head or tail of the business," said the alderman. "Tell me exactly how it came about that Holding is in your place, Ned. This note of his to me gives no reason for such conduct. A pretty sort of man, at his age, too. Serves his time aboard my ships, gets charge of the largest and best of them, and has every comfort, with good wages; then coolly throws the whole thing over to go to sea before the mast in a man-o'-war without so much as saying by your leave to me, the best friend he ever had."

"There's nothing to tell, sir. Holding came off to the frigate just as the anchor was up, saw the captain, and told him he wanted a cruise in a man-o'-war, and, if he would let me go, offered to take my place. I was not going to be so foolish as to refuse the chance—"

"It stands to reason that you wouldn't refuse," said Ellen, who had come back quietly and taken her place at the breakfast table. "You had better sit down and have your meal," she added. "If father is going to give you the command of the brig you ought to be on board now."

Preston looked meaningly at her. "Yes," he said, "until your father decides what to do I ought to be on board looking after things."

"Hold your tongue, Nell. Edward Preston has been four years at sea, and Holding has been more than five-and-twenty. The man who takes charge of the *Extenuate* will have to be a good sailor and know his business."

"Of course, sir; Cousin Ellen's note perhaps explains what was Holding's idea."

The alderman broke the shell of an egg very deliberately. "My daughter Ellen may know the meaning of the man's whim. She knows more than most gals of her age and station of life—and she knows how to hold her tongue."

"What did you say when Holding offered to stay in your place?"

"Oh, I don't know, Ellen. I just accepted his offer and got into the boat. Of course I thanked him and all that kind of thing."

"Father, when do you think Holding will get back?"

"I don't know, Nell—perhaps never, if a stray shot happens to hit him. Better than him have been killed in action."

"And many not fit to be spoken of in the same breath have taken precious good care not to risk their worthless bodies."

"I think a man's a fool to run after fighting, Cousin Ellen; unless, of course, it is in defence of his home."

"Look here, my lad, if you have finished your breakfast you'd better get aboard the brig. I'll be off to her in an hour or so, when we'll see what's to be done next."

"Very well, uncle; there's some refitting and a little paint wanted, and we will carry on till you come aboard."

"Very well," said Ellen. "Can you let George Tinkle come ashore? I want him to do something for me. Any time to-day will do."

"Yes. He said you wanted him; and I thought he came up here with me."

Then the young man went off to the brig; and on the way down to the water's edge, he knew not why, the castles in the air of the night before had all vanished, and doubts that the future would not be all plain sailing had taken their place. Certainly Ellen's manner was peculiar, he thought; but then she had to act a part while her father was present.

Alone with his daughter, the alderman lingered over his breakfast longer than usual, paying no heed to anything. Then he looked up and said, "Ellen, my gal, you were always fiery, like your mother afore you, and sometimes you and me don't altogether get on as father and daughter should."

Now, don't you flare up at what I am about to say, because I fancy somehow that you and me for once will be of a mind; but just give me truthful answers to my questions.

"Ask me anything you please, father dear. I have never lied to you, though I may not have been so meek as I ought."

"Just so. Now, did that fine young cousin of yours come sweethearting with you?"

"Yes, father," said the girl, looking the alderman straight in the face, and speaking firmly, though she was very pale, and Mr. Tuffin could see that she was trembling in every limb.

"Um! Well now, my dear, will you tell me how far this thing went?"

"Too far, too far. I am ashamed to say that yesterday I promised to marry him."

"Oh, indeed! Well, my gal, are you still of the same mind? When is the wedding to come off?"

"I would drown myself first."

"Hush, hush! Don't talk like that, and don't tremble so. Come, give me a kiss. We understand one another. Come, come! don't give way. I have one more question: Did Holding ever make love to you?"

"Never, father."

"Didn't he in any way just show that he thought more of you than most other gals?"

"I believe that Richard Holding is breaking his heart for me, and only now do I understand what a man he was; but he never once spoke."

"Never mind, my gal; knock off crying; it will all come right some day. Holding's not good enough for you, good as he is; and as to the other fellow, we shall see—we shall see."

Then the alderman put on his coat and hat, went down to the Point, and took a waterman's boat off to the brig. On board he found Mr. Preston, in the full exercise of his authority, setting the crew to work to paint the bulwarks.

"Well, sir, you see we are making her shipshape," said the young man as his uncle stepped on board. "When are we likely to get a cargo?"

"You tell that boy George Tinkle to be ready to scull me ashore. I want him to go up to the house. My daughter wants to see him. Knock off that painting."

"Very well, sir, and—"

"And look here, my lad, being my sister's son, I intend to do what I can for you, so you can have the day and these five pounds—more by four than I started in the world with. At the end of that time, if you are not clear of the town and well on the road to your mother in London, who'd best make a counter-jumper of you, I'll take care that the impress officer has you. Now go."

In ten minutes Alderman Tuffin had finished his business on the vessel and was duly sculled to the beach by the boy, who was ordered to make fast the boat and follow to the shop.

"Here, my dear, is George. Take him into the parlor and hear what he has to say, while I attend to business."

"George, my boy, I want you to tell me how it all happened, and how you came by the letter from Captain Holding."

"Well, it was like this. Capen 'Oldin', 'e goes down to the cabin wi' the skipper o' the frigate; then they sends for Capen Preston, and—"

"For Mr. Preston, you mean, George?"

The boy looked up sharply. "He were cap'en when I left the *Exterminate* a few minutes ago, anyhow, miss, until your father—"

"Maybe; but perhaps it was but a temporary command, George."

George looked very knowingly at the girl.

"Well, missus, you ought to know, bein' in the owner's confidence like; an' o' course—"

"Never mind, George, never mind; go on with your story."

"Well, when they was down in the cabin, presently Capen 'Oldin' comes up an' e' goes for'ard, an' the other feller 'e—"

"You mean Mr. Preston?"

"Yes, Mr. Preston. 'E—I mean the man-o'-war feller—'e says, "Bundle that rascal into the boat. Get him out o' my ship. I wouldn't 'ave a feller like 'im." Then we whips into the boat an' shoves off; but the other fellers—I mean Mr. Preston an' the sailor: that's Bill—they never takes the trouble to look round, so I sings out, 'Good-bye, Capen 'Oldin','" and there I saw him lean'in over the rail right up to the last."

"But how did you come by that letter for me? You must have had some talk with Captain Holding, and you must have seen him alone to have been given that."

"Look 'ere; ye're a sharp un, ye are. I was comin' to that; but I won't say no more unless ye tell me somethin'."

"I don't know what you mean, boy. What do you want to know?"

"Well, ye see, miss, it's like this: is he Capen Preston?"

"Tell me truly why you ask?"

"Ye haven't got to go to sea in the brig an' be knocked about by 'im. If I tells ye the whole lot I don't want my 'ead knocked off."

"My cousin will not be master of the brig."

"Hooray! But look 'ere now, is there anything between ye? 'E's a very good fellow, ye know; 'though I did say hooray, I never said nothin' agen' 'im."

The boy was looking at his owner's daughter. His head was tilted to one side and one eye closed, and such a wonderful depth of cunning was in his little wizened features that the girl, in spite of the weight at her heart, could not help laughing.

"My good boy—I believe you are a good boy—I will whisper to you: the man who has gone is worth a hundred of the man he has changed places with."

"I knowed it! I knowed it ye was the right sort. I knowed we was right. Me and Capen 'Oldin' knowed what we was about. I'll tell ye the whole lot now."

"Very well, George; tell your story and what it was that you and Captain Holding knew so well."

"It was like this, ye see: while they was in the wardroom they sends for me: an' the skipper (that's Capen 'Olden') 'e says, says 'e, 'Look 'ere, Jarge, you an' me's always been friends. You take this 'ere letter, an' give it to Mistress Tuffin, an' don't let no one see ye do it. I am goin' away in this 'ere ship, 'cos I think I ain't wanted by the young woman.' "

"Are you sure he said that?"

"That or very near them words. Then I says, 'Well, I'm goin' too. Me an' you's got on well together, an' I ain't goin' back without ye.' Then 'e says, 'Now, look 'ere, Jarge; off you go without no more words. Ye 'ave got to go back an' do what ye can for a certain young woman. I depend upon ye to look after 'er.' "

"Were those his exact words?"

"'Em or somethin' like 'em; anyhow, I says, 'Since ye put it that way, Capen, I'll go.'"

"Is that all?"

"No, it ain't; but the rest is what you've got to keep dark about. The skipper 'e sends for Mr. Preston, and afore 'e comes aft 'e hides Capen 'Oldin' out o' sight; then he gets talkin' to the mate an' leads 'im on a bit, an' the mate 'e spoke very nasty about Capen 'Oldin', an' said if 'e was a man an' a friend 'e 'd 'ave got him clear o' the frigate by that time."

"And Captain Holding heard all this?"

"We both o' us 'eard it. Then the skipper calls on Capen 'Oldin' to come out o' his hidin', an' 'e makes Capen 'Oldin' say what 'e was after to change places wi' the mate; but the mate only laughs an' says 'Oldin' was humbugging'; or anyhow it was a game between 'im an' the skipper o' the frigate."

"Where were you all this time?"

"I was outside, listenin' through the skylight. Then the sentry came along and drove me into the boat; but afore I was drove away I 'eard the capen o' the man-o'-war call Mr. Preston a cur and Capen 'Oldin' a man, an' I 'eard 'im say that if Mr. Preston 'ad shown 'isself a man instead o' a cur 'e 'd 'ave let 'em both go; but as it was, 'Oldin' was too good a man to lose and Preston too great a rascal for 'im to keep."

"Very well, George: go back to the brig, and keep this a secret between ourselves."

"All right, missus. I believe ye won't get me into no row; an' remember if ye wants anythin' I'm yer man, for Capen 'Oldin' he depends on me to be 'andy when ye're wantin' anythin'."

Then the boy went back to the brig, and Ellen to her bedroom, there to have what women call "a good cry."

But a good cry would have been a welcome heart-ease when a year later the *Aladdin* returned without Holding. The frigate's skipper himself called at the shop.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that Holding fell fighting on the deck of the Frenchman, and if the others had fought as well my boats would not have been driven off."

So to all Point, Ellen became a sour old maid, and when Alderman Tuffin died, and she carried on the business, it

was said of her that she was as good as a man in it—thinking of nothing else, managing her property in ships and in ship chandlery, and even managing her manager in much shrewder fashion than had her father before her.

Ten years after Holding sailed on his last voyage peace was declared, and the French prisoners from the hulks in the harbor and from Porchester Castle went home to their people; and little batches of released Englishmen landed at the seaport towns and tramped the roads to where they had left homes, only too often to find themselves forgotten, and strangers occupying the seats they had thought would be theirs.

Melancholy witness to the glory of war were these men, clad in rags, often minus a limb or an eye, pointing to their battle-scars as surely having earned them a crust or a drink, as they begged their way through the green lanes of England.

It was such an one that aroused the suspicions of Mr. George Tinkle, manager for Mistress Tuffin's ship chandlery, as hobbling by the aid of a stick over the step to the counter of the dark little shop, a one-armed, lame, unshaven, and ragged sailor asked to see Alderman Tuffin.

"Dead. What do you want?"

"Dead! Well, well, my lad! you have forgotten me, I can see, and no wonder. My name is—"

"Captain Holding. Oh my!" The manager jumped over the counter and grabbed one hand and a stump, unable to utter another word, though for half a minute he moved Holding's arm and a half up and down in frantic endeavors to pump up whole sentences of welcome.

Some one in the shop parlor had heard and seen enough; and before Holding had time to open his mouth a woman hung upon his neck and stopped his utterances with kisses.

A few months later the sign over the ship chandlery was altered to Tuffin, Holding & Co., and the official registry of shipping set forth that certain brigs belonging to Portsmouth were now owned by Richard Holding and wife, except for a few shares held by one George Tinkle.



THE Doctor's Story:

A Tale of Enduring Love, by
Guy de Maupassant. Trans-
lated from the French by
Eugénie Norwood*



IT was the end of the dinner that opened the hunt. The Marquis-de Bertrans with his guests sat around a brightly illuminated table, covered with fruits and flowers. The conversation drifted to love. Immediately there arose an animated discussion, the same eternal discussion as to whether it were possible to love more than once. Examples were cited of persons who had loved once, these were offset by those who had loved violently many times. The men agreed that passion like sickness, may attack the same person several times, unless it strikes to kill. This conclusion seemed quite incontestable. The women, however, who based their opinion on poetry rather than on practical observation affirmed that love, the great passion may come only once to mortals. It resembles powder, they said, this love. A heart once touched with it becomes forever so emptied, so ravaged, so consumed, that no other strong sentiment can find rest in it, not even a dream.

The Marquis, who had indulged in many love affairs, disputed this belief.

"I tell you it is possible to love several times with all one's heart and soul. You quote examples of persons who have killed themselves to prove the impossibility of a second passion. I wager that if they had not stupidly committed suicide and so destroyed the possibility of a second experience they would have found a new love and still another

*Translated for Short Stories.

and so on till death. It is with love as with drink. He who has once indulged is a slave forever. It is a thing of temperament."

They chose the old Doctor as arbitrator. He thought it was as the Marquis had said, a thing of temperament.

"As for me," he said, "I once knew of a love which lasted fifty-five years without one day's respite, which ended only with death." The wife of the Marquis clasped her hands.

"That is beautiful! Ah what a dream to be loved in such a way! What happiness to live fifty-five years enveloped in an unfailing, penetrating affection. How this happy being must have blessed his life to be so adored!"

The Doctor smiled.

"You are not mistaken, Madame, on this point—the loved one was a man. You even know him; it is Monsieur Chonquet, the pharmacist. As to the woman, you also knew her, the old chair mender, who came every year to the Château." The enthusiasm of the women fell. Some expressed their contempt with "Pouah!" for the love of common people did not interest them. The Doctor continued: "Three months ago I was called to the death-bed of the old chair mender. The curé had preceded me. She wished to make us the executors of her will. In order that we might understand her conduct, she told us the story of her life. It is most singular and touching. Her father and mother were both chair menders. She never lived long in any one place. As a little child she wandered about with them, dirty, unkempt, hungry. They visited many towns, leaving their horse, wagon and dog just outside the limits, where the child played in the grass alone until her parents had mended all the broken chairs in the place. They seldom spoke, except to cry, 'Chairs! Chairs! Mender of Chairs!'

"When the little one strayed too far away she would be recalled by the harsh angry voice of her father. She never heard a word of affection. When she grew older she fetched and carried the broken chairs. Then it was she made friends with the little street 'gamins,' but their parents always called them away and scolded them for speaking to the bare-footed 'mender.' Often the boys threw stones at her. Once a kind woman gave her a few pennies. She treasured them up most carefully.

"One day—she was then eleven years old—as she picked

her way through a country town, she met behind the cemetery the little Chonquet, weeping bitterly, because one of his playmates had stolen two precious pennies. The tears of the small villager, one of these much envied mortals, whom she imagined never knew trouble, upset her completely. She approached him and, bowing, ascertained the cause of his grief, put into his hands all of her savings, her seven pennies. He took them without hesitation and dried his eyes. Wild with joy, she kissed him. He was busy counting his money, and made no objection. She, seeing that she was not repulsed, began again to kiss him and even gave him a tremendous hug—then she ran away.

“What was going on in her poor little head? Was it because she had sacrificed all of her fortune that she became madly fond of him, or was it because she had given him her first tender kiss? The mystery is alike for children and for those of riper years. For months she dreamed of that corner near the cemetery and of the little villager. She stole pennies from her parents to give him at their next meeting. When she returned to the spot near the cemetery he was not there. Passing his father's pharmacy, she caught sight of him behind the counter. He was sitting between a large red globe and a blue one. She only loved him the more and wrought up to an ecstasy by the sight of him surrounded by the brilliant colored globes, nearly fainted with emotion. She cherished forever in her heart this beautiful sight. The following year she met him near the school playing marbles. She threw herself on him, took him in her arms, and kissed him with such violence that he cried aloud. To quiet him she gave him all her money. Three francs! A real gold mine, at which he gazed with staring eyes.

“After this he allowed her to caress him as much as she wished. During the next four years she put into his hands all her savings, which he pocketed conscientiously in exchange for kisses. At one time it was thirtysous, at another two francs. Again she only had twelve sous. She wept with grief and mortification, explaining brokenly that it had been a poor year. The next time she brought five francs, in one whole piece, which made her laugh with contentment. She no longer thought of any one but the boy and he watched for her with impatience; sometimes he would run to meet her. This made her heart thump with joy. Suddenly he dis-

appeared. He had gone to college. She found this out by careful investigation. She soon ingratiated herself with his parents and used her diplomacy in order that they might call him home for the holidays. After a year of intrigue she succeeded. She had not seen him for two years, and scarcely recognized him, he was so changed, tall, beautiful and dignified in his uniform, with its brass buttons. He pretended not to know her and passed by, without a glance. She wept for two days and since then loved and suffered until the end.

"Every year he returned and she passed him, not daring to lift her eyes. He never condescended to turn his head toward her. She loved him madly, hopelessly. She said to me:

"'He is the only man whom I have ever seen. I don't even know if there exists another.' Her parents died. She went on with their work.

"One day on entering the village, where her heart always remained, she saw Chonquet coming out of his pharmacy with a young woman leaning on his arm. She was his wife. That night the chair mender threw herself into the river. A drunkard passing the spot pulled her out and took her to the pharmacy. The young Chonquet came down in his wrapper to revive her. Without seeming to know who she was he undressed her and rubbed her; then he said, in a harsh voice:

"'You are mad! People must not do stupid things like that.' His voice brought her to life again, and she was happy for a long time. He refused remuneration for his trouble, although she insisted.

"All her life passed in this way. She worked, thinking always of him. She began to buy medicines at his pharmacy; this gave her a chance to talk to him and to see him closely. In a way she was still able to give him money.

"As I said before, she died this spring. When she had closed her pathetic story she begged me to take her earnings to the man she loved. She had worked only that she might leave him something to remind him of her after death. I gave Monsieur the Curé fifty francs for her funeral expenses. The next morning I took the rest to Monsieur Chonquet as he was finishing his breakfast. His wife sat at the table, fat and red, important and satisfied. They welcomed me and offered me some coffee, which I accepted. Then I began my story

in a trembling voice, sure that they would be softened, even to tears. As soon as Chonquet understood that he had been loved by 'That vagabond! that chair mender! that wanderer!' he swore with indignation as though his reputation had been destroyed, the respect of decent people lost, his personal honor, something precious and dearer than life, gone. His exasperated wife kept repeating: 'That thing! That thing!'

"Seeming unable to find words suitable to the enormity, he stood up and began striding about. He muttered: 'Can you understand anything so horrible, Doctor? Oh, if I had only known it while she was alive, I should have had her clapped into prison. I promise you she would not have escaped.'

"I was dumbfounded; I hardly knew what to think or say, but I had to finish my mission. 'She commissioned me,' I said, 'to give you her savings, which amount to 3,500 francs. As what I have just told you seems to be very repugnant, perhaps you would prefer to give this money to the poor.'

"They looked at me, that man and woman, speechless with amazement. I took the few thousand francs from out of my pocket. Wretched looking money from every country. Pennies and gold pieces all mixed together. Then I asked:

"What is your decision?"

"Madame Chonquet spoke to me first. 'Well, since it is the dying woman's wish, it seems to me impossible to refuse it.'

"Her husband said, rather shame-facedly: 'We could buy with it something for our children.'

"I answered dryly: 'As you wish.'

"He replied: 'Well, give it to us anyway, since she commissioned you to do so; we will find a way to use it in some good work.'

"I gave them the money, bowed and left.

"The next day Chonquet came to me and said brusquely:

"That woman left her wagon here—what have you done with it?"

"Nothing; take it if you wish.'

"It's just what I wanted,' he added, and walked off. I called him back and said:

"She also left her old horse and two dogs. Don't you need them?"

"He stared at me surprised: 'Well, no! really what would I do with them? Dispose of them as you like.'

"He laughed and held out his hand to me. I shook it. What will you? The Doctor and the pharmacist must not be at enmity. I have kept the dogs. The Curé took the old horse. The wagon is useful to Chonquet, and with the money he has bought railroad stock. That is the only deep, unfailing example of love I have ever known in my life."

The Doctor looked up. The Marquise, whose eyes were full of tears, sighed and said:

"Undeniably, only women know how to love."





HE Hunting of Chilton

Sahib: A Tale of India, by

Dolf Wyllarde*



THE Brahmin had crossed the Dekkan afoot in his pilgrimage, and reached the little Indian village where the Shrine was, in the blazing noonday. His father, and his father's father, had vowed a vow to Vishnu that one of their race should make this journey, but it fell to Rung Dow to carry out that promise, and youth was far behind him before he made the attempt. Vishnu had appeared to Nana Dow and had promised him his favor if the neglected Shrine at Kali were jealously guarded and served by one of his race; and because he hoped for Heaven, Nana Dow, a Brahmin himself, had undertaken the charge for his descendants. The Shrine was but poorly served; hardly an offering was laid, or a prayer made, before the peculiarly hideous presentation of Vishnu which stood there, and which the villagers neglected. But when Rung Dow had crossed the Dekkan on foot—as the God had stipulated—all that was to be changed. The people of Kali would recognize him as a holy man, and would return to Vishnu, and all the land would flourish thereby.

Rung Dow had accomplished his pilgrimage. His feet were burnt and blistered with the hot plains and the rocky hills; for he might take no advantage of other travelers' pity, and accept their offers of assistance over certain stages of his journey. Once he fell in with a hunters' encampment, and the Sahibs, who could speak his tongue, would have taken him forward with their party; but he might not accept, for Vishnu had said, "Go afoot, and fear not." Jungle and scrub, bare hillside and cultivated land, all baked by the pitiless

*From the Badminton Magazine.

sun, had drifted slowly by him, until in the hush of the Indian noon the mud walls of the village with the shrine rose before his longing eyes; and he prostrated himself to thank the God who had brought him safely over the weary miles—the God who had promised that neither beast nor man should harm his pilgrim. Mecca to the Mohammedan was not more sacred than the village of the Shrine to the Brahmin priest.

But he was almost at the end of his strength. From village to village scattered across the Dekkan he had been fed by the god-fearing folk, who had given him a handful of grain, or a cake baked among the ashes; but he was an old man, and the journey would have worn out anyone less upheld by religious enthusiasm. The fanatic can endure longer than ordinary men, but Rung Dow was nearly exhausted. He stumbled as he approached the outlying mud huts, and sank down on the baked earth, gazing with filmy eyes at the object of his hopes—the tall pagoda of the Shrine which rose above the rest of the village. To die of exhaustion now, when the pilgrimage was accomplished! The gods could not be so cruel! Had Vishnu failed him?

A woman came running from the nearest hut, for she had seen the failing figure, and recognized its caste. She laid before him both clear water from the river which had of old time been blessed by Vishnu, and some rice in a metal pan. She was of a Brahmin household, and it was not forbidden him to eat what she brought. He drank a little water and revived, blessing her children, and promising her house prosperity. Then, seated on the ground, he proceeded to make a cooking-stove of mud and to cook the grain. Beyond himself and his culinary arrangements he drew a broad line of demarcation—the sacred circle which keeps the Brahmin and his food holy. Once during the process he almost swooned again from the heat and exhaustion, while the woman and her neighbors stood at a little distance, watching with strained anxiety, but powerless to help him further.

The food was all but ready, and the famished man about to bless it and eat, when the crowd of villagers parted to allow someone to pass. It was Chilton Sahib, head of the district, and a great man among his people, not only because he was a white man and English, but because he talked to the wild

things of the Dekkan through a fire-stick and then they fell down and died. Chilton had only had his district some six months, and thought he was beginning to understand his people; which was an error of judgment. They liked him, he knew, and he was pleased at that, and at the quantity of game he found to destroy—the sambur, and an occasional antelope, even a man-eating tiger which he had slain to the everlasting gratitude of the village, and, above all, the great gray boar which frequents the ravines and the hillsides, and which will fight to the death. On the whole Chilton was inclined to congratulate himself on his district. He was comfortably satisfied, certainly thinking of no ill-luck, and his head running more upon crops than Brahmins as he strode along, watched by the villagers. He did not notice the sitting figure on the ground—he knew something of native habits—or observe its caste; he did not notice the ring drawn on the sandy soil as he passed by it—and his shadow fell straight across it and on the cooked rice which Rung Dow was just about to bless.

The Brahmin took the contents of the metal pan and tossed it outside the circle without a second's hesitation. It was his last effort. As Chilton passed on in the sunlight the pilgrim fell quietly on his side, and lay there as if smitten. There was a murmur that rose to a wail among the villagers, and those of his own caste hurried forward to the rescue. The old man was still alive, but it was too late; perhaps, would have been too late in any case though the superstition of the villagers laid the disaster directly at the Englishman's door. That night there was weeping and lamentation before the Shrine, because a priest had died on the outskirts of the village, and the pilgrimage of Rung Dow had come to naught. His mission was not known in Kali; but his caste, and his obvious desire towards holy things in journeying a long way to the Shrine, were sufficient to make him the equivalent of a patron saint. Brahmins do not arrive at outlying villages dying of fatigue, and with the signs of their travel upon them, without a religious object. The village of the Shrine wailed to Vishnu.

A week later the Shikaree of the village brought Chilton Sahib news of a sounder of hog, led by a great boar. The sounder was located in a ravine among the barren stony hills. Would Chilton Sahib go out and slay him? Without doubt

it was a big boar—a boar that had never been equalled in size and ferocity, and worthy the spear of the renowned slayer of wild beasts. Chilton Sahib would indeed go out, and his heart waxed warm within him, and his English blood sang to the tune of slaughter. Nor did he notice anything unusual in the Shikaree's earnestness over the peculiarities of the great boar, or his almost awed description of its unearthly fighting powers. That such a wild idea as the soul of the dead Brahmin (dishonored by the Englishman's shadow, and some failure of his object in pilgrimaging to the Shrine) having entered this huge boar, had taken hold of the villagers' minds, never occurred to the head of the district. But the villagers talked of it beneath their breath. Why otherwise should a boar, quite unrivalled for ferocity and size, have suddenly appeared to tempt the hunting instincts of the Sahib to a deadly combat? Without doubt the Brahmin, sanctioned by Vishnu, had temporarily discarded his caste, and his spirit had entered the body of an unclean animal that he might slay Chilton Sahib. When the feud was wiped out by blood the priest would, by favor of the gods, regain his caste and attain to paradise.

Now, to hunt hog you must rise early, and Chilton was up before sunrise, unwitting of the interest that centred round his person as one foredoomed to death. There is, to the Indian hunter, no game like the big *Sus aper*, which can at times outpace the swiftest horse and which will turn to bay and make such a fight of it at the end as may easily give him victory over the sportsman. Chilton grieved that he had no time to get a hunting party together; for to draw first blood and win the spur of honor was denied him in the absence of any opponent. He intended, as a matter of course, to take the Shikaree with him, as well as the beaters; but after all it came to a fight between him and the boar. There was some consolation in that; but there was no exciting race against another man as eager as himself to be the first to dim the spear-head with the smallest drop of blood, no matter who finished the work, and he regretted the lack of competition.

The gray morning was hanging mysteriously over the village, and over Chilton's queer little bungalow, as he came out on to the verandah. The scouts were back already with news of the sounder's trail, and Chilton's Arab was waiting

for him, chafing at the bit and tossing his light head because the shadows of the dawn were full of bogies to his mind. The native groom was talking to him as a mother to a child, and grim and silent the Shikaree sat in the little mud yard before the bungalow. Chilton spoke to him cheerily as he swung himself into the saddle; but the man only answered briefly, and with more than the usual stolidity of the Oriental; he had little to say to a man whom he considered to be foredoomed. But Chilton had not time to notice his silence; he mounted at once, and rode out a little ahead of the native, his horsekeeper and the beaters following in the rear, away over the broken plain to the nullah into which the sounder had been marked down at break of day. Like much of the hunting country of the Dekkan, it was about as difficult a spot as the wily beasts could have chosen; a narrow ravine between two steep hillsides, where the dry bed of an empty watercourse presented an awkward jump, however well the hunter might be mounted. Chilton, like all his kind, was proportionately pleased.

"Jove: the brute knows his ground, eh, Junga?" he said, cheerily, as he halted in some loose scrub at the mouth of the narrow gorge, and the beaters began to skirt round the hill. "Any idea where the sounder is?"

"There, Sahib!" The Shikaree pointed to some low scrub on the hillside, where it was thought that the pigs were concealed. But with a trace more animation than he had yet showed, he added, "Will the Sahib follow the sounder, or wait only for the great boar?"

"Oh, I will take the game the gods provide!" said Chilton, easily. "But if my luck holds I shall have the boar yet. There they go!"

For down the hillside came a grunting, heaving mass of black backs, and behind them came the beaters, making a noise unearthly enough to have driven the scriptural herd of swine into the sea without any possession by devils. With a grunt and a scramble two large boars came down one side of the hill, crossed the watercourse as only a boar can cross such impediments, and ascending the opposite bank, made for the plain. Chilton wheeled his horse round and dashed after them; but, as luck would have it, some misgiving of an outlet seemed to disturb their minds, for they suddenly stopped and turned hillwards again. Seeing this, Chilton

crossed the dry bed of the watercourse in turn, and urging his horse up the broken ascent, he was soon on terms with the foremost boar, who instantly turned to bay. The bright steel head of the bamboo flashed like lightning ahead of the game little Arab who was laboring up the rough ground, and then the sharp spear buried itself in the boar's side fair through the heart. As the animal stumbled the spear snapped, and the horse, checking himself as best he could, scrambled along for some paces, the broken spear remaining in Chilton's hand.

"That," said Chilton, turning to meet the Shirakee, "reminded me of polo. I got the ball, and couldn't see whether I had succeeded in making a goal. Good sport, Junga!"

"The Sahib is a great chief, and his spear invincible!" said the man, with unmoved flattery. "See, already one boar has been killed; but does the Sahib not desire the tusks of that great one who is still unharmed?"

"My good fellow, the sun is not at his full height yet, and my horse is not blown!" said Chilton, coolly. "I will hunt till nightfall, Junga, if you will show me the game."

"Choose another spear then, Sahib, and breathe your horse. The great hog has not stolen away, and he may yet be afoot. The beaters are again ready."

Chilton swung himself out of the saddle, backing the Arab into some scrub on the hillside. There was a silence as of perfect peace over the ravine, and the increasing power of the sun was drawing strong scents from the vegetation. Overhead a great kite hung in the vault of blue, in ominous anticipation. Nothing broke the rich silence of the hillside to Chilton's ear save the jingle of his own horse's bridle as the Arab tossed his fine head impatiently. He was a true specimen of an Arab hunter—lightly built, yet in perfect proportion, and with that length and strength in his quarters that proclaimed speed and endurance; but the legs, more especially the forelegs, were marked and scarred with many an old fight, the unintentional tribute of his adversary the boar, at whose death he had frequently assisted. Chilton quietly remounted after a brief rest and sat on his horse, wondering if it would not be better to have tiffin now instead of waiting for another beat.

"He comes, Sahib!"

Junga's repressed excitement escaped Chilton, whose five

senses and a few extra were concentrated on the patch of scrub from which the hog might be expected to break cover, and the Shirakee's curious manner did not impress him either. He sat his Arab with every nerve tense, the spear ready for use on the chance of the animal charging. The boar, however, had no intention of thus running into the enemy's jaws. He broke cover, the beaters yelling above him, trotted sullenly down to the watercourse, and turning short to the right made for the head of the narrow gorge which looked like a *cul-de-sac* to Chilton. But it was possible there might be an outlet, and in the hope of this the Englishman urged his horse down the hillside in pursuit as fast as he dared, with the result that the Arab suddenly stumbled, and horse and rider finished the descent ignominiously by rolling over into the empty river bed. Chilton was up in an instant, and had recovered his spear before the horse was fairly on his feet. He was not hurt, but he had no time to remount before he saw that the boar had turned. A wild boar, one of the great gray hog of India, moves at first breaking cover at a pace peculiarly his own—he does not gallop exactly, though his speed is soon such that it needs a fast horse to ride him down. But in his charge he appears to jump off the ground and be literally hurling himself through the air, all four feet stretched out like a horse's as he rises at a big jump. The effect is ludicrous to the onlooker, who is not taking part in the game. To the man who faces the charge it is by no means amusing, and Chilton was on foot! To spear a boar rightly one should be on horseback and so meet the charge at a gallop, otherwise the horse will probably get ripped open by those mighty tusks.

Chilton stood his ground. There was just one chance for him, that by springing aside the force of the boar's pace might carry him past, if the man did not succeed in planting his spear. Even in the stress of the moment a wonder flashed through his brain that the Shikaree did not come to the rescue, or at least attempt it. He had heard his own Arab turn short round and gallop off panic-stricken without the guiding will of a rider. If he could have looked behind him he would have seen that the Shirakee was sitting motionless on a steep rock a few yards up the hillside, watching, with something that was almost awe in his face, for what he considered the struggle ordained by the gods between the soul of the

dead Brahmin in the boar's body and the unconscious murderer. The beaters had stopped also, and formed the same silent group of spectators on the further hillside; while Chilton's horsekeeper, behind Junga but further up the hill, was in the same attitude of arrested motion. Between the spectators was Chilton in the dry bed of the watercourse, and the great boar charging down on them. Overhead the kite had dropped a few feet lower, and waited also.

The man saw the foam flying from the beast's mouth, and heard the savage grunt as he stood steadily facing the direction from which the boar was coming—facing death, as it well might be. How wicked the little gray eyes looked! How those long tusks would gore and tear! He had seen many a horse ripped open because of an unskilful rider, and once a horsekeeper had been killed before his very eyes—trampled and gored to death, and then flung over the boar's head, as easily as a child tosses a ball. The charge was upon him—the shaggy gray thing looming as large as a donkey—and with a last supreme effort springing aside, he felt the enormous brute almost brush him as he blundered past, and lunged out awkwardly with the spear. It entered the tough side behind the shoulder, and passed straight through the heart; but the weapon was dragged from his hand, and he himself was swung staggering towards the boar.

With a dizzy feeling he turned to look at his handiwork. Had the boar attempted more mischief it would have gone hard with Chilton, left without a spear as he had been. But the lump of blood-stained gray lay inert before him, the nine-inch tusks still grimly flecked with blood and foam, for the resolute lunge of the spear had done its work in a final manner that seemed little short of miraculous. Not until he was sure that the brute was really dead did Chilton discover that his followers had at last joined him, and demanded the reason of their delay from Junga.

"What the deuce did you mean by keeping away?" he said, hotly. "You saw I was dismounted—where were you?"

The Shikaree's face darkened a little, as if his pride were touched; but he answered patiently:

"The Sahib knows I have no fear. Did I not attend him when he tracked the wounded tiger, and have I not been present at the death of many boars? But *this* boar was

different. It was decreed that the Sahib must fight with him alone, and the gods have given their favor to the victor!"

He salaamed as reverently as if Chilton were himself a god, causing the young man to stare at him blankly.

"It was decreed!" he repeated. "What was decreed, and why? What on earth do you mean, Junga?"

"The Sahib is the god's favorite—what he does has sanction. But, indeed, not many days since he slew a holy man—a priest who, without doubt, was a pilgrim to the Shrine. "The Sahib forgets," he added, soothingly. "What are such things to one whom Vishnu favors above the lives of priests? But, indeed, his shadow fell upon the food which would have saved the fainting life of one who sat by the wayside, and—and— it was a Brahmin, Sahib! He threw away the food, and before we could succor him he died!"

Chilton grew paler than the boar's charge had made him, as some meaning of the situation flashed into his mind. He had been long enough in India to realize what he had done—in all innocence—and that his Shikaree would have calmly stood by and seen him killed before he would have interfered with what he thought was the will of the gods. Chilton ordered the submissive natives—submissive enough *now*!—to rest, and said shortly that he would have tiffin, leaving Junga to arrange about the dead boar. Not until he was sitting under a date tree clump eating his lunch did he gather the full meaning of the situation from the Shikaree's explanation. And he thought of the shaggy gray hide, the little fierce eyes, the white tusks speckled with foam as the boar charged, and his blood ran colder than at the actual moment of peril.

"So you would all have left me to my death!" he said slowly as he lit his cigar and looked down the baked ravine where the shadows of the rocks were cut sharp and black by the blinding sunshine.

"Truly, Sahib, if the gods decreed it! For our aid would have been as nothing. The Sahib had to prove his right to kill the Brahmin!"

"And now that I have killed the boar?"

"The Sahib is great in favor with the gods! Who shall stand against him?"

"I suppose," said Chilton, thoughtfully, "that the beaters won't think it necessary to avenge the boar, will they, Junga?"

I should like to know what to expect. And possibly they might regard themselves as chosen instruments of Vishnu, eh?"

But the man smiled as at a jest. "The Sahib knows that that could not be so. We are all thy slaves, Heavenborn!"

"I did *think* I knew; but it strikes me that I know very little. So I have cleared myself from further suspicion by to-day's slaughter, have I? Still, I should not care to repeat that five minutes. Junga, it is in my mind that the day has become too hot for more hunting. I will rest, and go home."

"The Sahib is wise," said Junga, submissively; "and, indeed, he has had a great hunt, and has killed much game. Will you ride? For the beaters will rejoice to make a palanquin of boughs and palms, and carry you on their shoulders in triumph do you so please!"

Chilton stared. He thought of the callous indifference of these same men in his extreme peril, and that not from being unarmed, but because they deliberately stood aside to see if he were Vishnu's favorite. Now they would have made a smaller deity of him, and carried him home rejoicing; for had he not killed the boar, afoot, with all the odds against him, and proved that he was great in favor with the gods in spite of slaying the Brahmin priest? Great was Chilton Sahib, and greatly to be honored!

"Truly, you are a strange people!" said Chilton.





**VICTORIOUS Sur-
render: A Story of New
England, by Margaret Johnson.
Illustrations by R. T. Schultz***



THE shades were scarcely drawn up from the windows of the little shop, which, glittering in the morning sunshine, courted attention to the rows upon rows of toys and goodies spread within, when the shop-bell tinkled briskly, and a little fat urchin entered with a grave and business-like air, to make his early purchase.

This was no raw new customer, unfamiliar with the traditions of the place, respected and observed by all those privileged to trade therein. He knew exactly in which corner of the sparkling showcase to look for his heart's chosen dainties.

*Written for Short Stories.

He had a pleasing intimacy with the color of the paper and string which hid their lusciousness temporarily from his view. He took his package from Miss Hatty's own fair hands with a murmured thank-you; and having received it, deposited the three pennies which constituted the whole of his immediate fortune, without hesitation or question, in the china bowl of clear water which stood at one end of the spotless counter. Then he took his departure, gravely, though with joy.

When his small figure, radiating satisfaction even from the rear view of its round head and chubby shoulders, had disappeared between the white-curtained door, Miss Hatty dipped her slender fingers in the bowl and withdrew the pennies delicately, drying them on a soft napkin which lay folded beside it. Every coin received from the grimy fingers of her small customers—and from older ones, too, for that matter—must undergo this process of purification before it was fit for its immaculate surroundings.

It was difficult to believe that any speck of dust or dirt had ever touched Miss Hatty. Standing in the bright sunshine that streamed in through the little shop-window, she was seen to be as fresh and exquisite a thing as the spring morning itself. A drop of dew, a snowflake new-fallen, a shell washed by the waves—these were not purer, daintier than she, with her slight figure in its spotless print gown and snowy apron, the roseleaf color in her cheeks, the limpid gray eyes, and shining hair brushed smooth and rippling from her pearly temples. Younger she might have been—prettier, perhaps; but seeing her as she was, it would not for a moment have occurred to you to wish her otherwise. Save for the tiny cloud which hung this morning, unwonted, over her serene forehead.

Little Milly Davis, her assistant, and as faithful a copy of her mistress as neatness and comeliness could make her, observed this cloud with both wonder and distress. It did not vanish when Miss Hatty went into the little room back of the shop, and sat down to finish her breakfast. She sighed as she lifted her coffee to her lips, and her brother Sam, sitting opposite, looked up and went on with what he had been saying before the interruption of the customer.

Sam was large and ruddy. He had a big heart and a great voice.

"I tell you what it is, Hatty," he said, bringing down his

hand with emphasis on the snowy table, "Wallpaper you ought to have, and wallpaper you *shall* have before you're a week older! Here's Pillow's side of the house as gay as a posy bed with blue and yellow stripes, and roses and tulips and birds of paradise and what not, and yours as bare as the desert of Sahary. It struck me, worse'n ever, when I came in last night, and I just made up my mind it shouldn't go on so any longer!"

"But I don't *want* wallpaper, Sam!" protested Miss Hatty, her roseleaf color deepening to a most lovely crimson. "You know I don't. I never could bear anything glarey to the eyes. And it won't wash. It isn't near as clean as paint. Susy Pillow and I went to school together. I like Susy. And I don't grudge her the wallpaper if she wants it, but I don't want it!"

"Susy Pillow, indeed!" cried Sam, waxing warm, and spreading his bread all too generously with jam in the excitement of his feelings. "And she only a Purdy, and you a Bascom! It would be a pity if you couldn't be as fine as she is! If she only knew it, she'll be bidding good-bye to the roses and tulips before she has much more time to look at 'em. I've waited long enough for her and Pillow to pay that interest money—" He stopped rather suddenly.

"Sam," said his sister, laying down her fork, "you aren't going to foreclose?"

Mr. Bascom cleared his throat and looked grave.

"Yes," he said, "I am. Patience has had her perfect work long ago—with Pillow. He needs a lesson, and I'm going to give him one by settling that thing up this week. The money's due Friday, and if he doesn't come down with it by three o'clock that day, the deed's done, and out they go!"

Miss Hatty looked at her brother distressfully, her soft eyes softer with their springing tears.

"I didn't think you'd do it, Sam," she said, "indeed I didn't. I used to go to school with Susy Pillow, and I just can't bear to see her turned out that way!"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Bascom, hastily, disturbed by her tears, "don't you worry about it, Hatty. You know I've yielded to you half a dozen times already. I'm too easy-going by half, and that's a fact, but when I do make up my mind about a thing, I stand by it—there, there, my dear, don't you distress yourself! About that wallpaper, now. I

declare if I haven't set my heart on your having it! Just think how much cheerier you'd be with a nice gay pattern—" he looked around at the bare gray walls of the little parlor—"here and in the hall! I'm going back to the city to-day, and I'll tell you what it is, I'm going to send you that paper—pick it out myself, the very prettiest there is in all Boston—make you a present of it."

A spark of fire dried the dew in Miss Hatty's eyes.

"I don't want it, thank you, Sam," she said, with a firmness as absolute as it was gentle. "And I sha'n't hang it if you do send it to me."

"Tut, tut! Sha'n't? I say *shall!*" retorted Mr. Bascom, smiling with the most imperturbable good-humor. He went round and put his hands on his sister's slim shoulders. He might have tossed her to the ceiling if he had chosen.

"See here, Hatty," he said, "I like to have my own way once in a while, just for a change. I want you to have that paper. It'll brighten you up, make you ten years younger, and show the neighbors we know what's what as well as any one. I'm going to send it to you bright and early to-morrow, and if you'll hang it, I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll let up on Pillow, and give him another chance. How's that for a bargain?"

He did not wait for an answer, but gave her the gentlest of shakes before he let her go, went out laughing into the hall, thrust his great shoulders into his overcoat, kissed his hand, and was off with a hearty goodbye and a bang of the front door that set the little house a-tremble.

"Spunkiest little woman in all Massachusetts," he chuckled to himself, striding away down the street, "if she does look like a piece of your great-grandmother's best china, just fit to crush in your hands. She won't do it, I suppose; always manages to have her own way, somehow. But I need something to keep me up to that resolution about Pillow. And if I *should* have to let him off, well, it would be worth it to me, twice over, to see Hatty give in."

Miss Hatty, left alone in the hall after that slam of the front door, stood still and looked about her, trembling.

Half the house, with the shop, the little parlor back of it, and the two tiny chambers above, was hers; the corresponding half, without the shop window, belonged to the Pillows. The line of division ran through the center of the hall, and

was as clearly marked as was the character of the owners. On Mrs. Pillow's side the floor was covered with a strip of gay carpet. The wall flamed with the gorgeous and intricate pattern of the paper which had so aroused the admiration and envy of Mr. Bascom. Its surface reflected the sunshine which fell through the fanlight over the door, and distracted the eye with the variety and splendor of its hues. Miss Hatty's wall was painted a sombre though spotless yellow, and the boards of her floor were left bare and scrubbed to a snowy whiteness.

"I can't do it!" she murmured, clasping her slender fingers in distress. "I can't! It's too much to ask. I should feel as if the house was in a perfect clutter if I had those images all over my wall. I couldn't breathe. It don't seem to me it's the place for such things, anyway, seems kind of wicked, birds and flowers, and they'd haunt me. I should dream of 'em. What *did* Sam ask me to do it for?"

The roses and tulips swam before her tearful vision, swollen to a gigantic and awful size. The birds of Paradise performed astonishing feats of grand and lofty tumbling as she winked to keep the tears back, their rainbow feathers all a-quiver.

She went back into the parlor where Milly Davis waited in a breathless and solemn agitation, ready to condole if permitted, to sympathize in silence if the delicate reserves of her mistress required such a sacrifice.

"Of course they *had* ought to pay their interest money," mused Miss Hatty, looking at the child with dazed and woeful eyes as if she scarcely realized her presence. "But Susy Pillow's lived here so long, it'll about break her heart to go away. I do suppose it's my duty as a neighbor and a Christian to help her out, if it's anyways in my power to do it. I wish it wasn't. I wish—I don't see how I can, anyhow in the world. It'll be every bit as hard as moving myself to have all those things staring and flaring at me, and figurin' round me all the time. I'd *rather* move. I'd rather go and live somewhere else, in a strange house, than stay here where it won't seem like home any more."

Milly, round-eyed, awed and fascinated by this unheard of outburst from her gentle mistress, ventured a trembling word of consolation.

"Don't you think, Miss Hatty, maybe, in time, you know, you might get used to it, maybe?"

But Miss Hatty turned upon her with a pale though gentle austerity.

"Milly," she said, "there's the shop-bell, run and see what's wanted."

After that the day wore away slowly and in silence. An atmosphere of gloom pervaded shop and parlor. Trade was dull, though the day was so bright, and even the tinkle of the little bell, usually so cheerful and inspiring, had now a lugubrious and tuneless sound, as if it shared the general dejection. The lights were extinguished early, and bidding Milly a kind but distant good-night, Miss Hatty retired to her chamber.

What spiritual struggles were hers during the night watches, what self-communings, what debates between conscience and inclination, what deep and sorrowful study of the situation in all its aspects, these things no one ever knew. But when dawn broke, it found her sleeping quietly, her smooth cheek, pure as an infant's, pressed tranquilly upon her maiden pillow. and when she came down-stairs, rustling crisply in her fresh print gown, the cloud of yesterday had vanished from her face. There shone instead upon her brow, a serious, an almost saintly serenity. The battle had evidently been fought, the victory won.

As she pulled up the blinds to let in a stream of morning sunshine, re-arranged with careful hands the contents of her window, or busied herself with Milly's help, about her little breakfast-table, everywhere, a mild and beautiful calm seemed to enfold and diffuse itself about her like a fragrance. Even when, later in the day, the fidelity of Mr. Bascom's purpose was proved by the arrival of the wall-paper, deposited, rolls and rolls of it, in the little hall by a wondering expressman when, upon inspection, it was found to be more magnificent than Mrs. Pillow's, the glories of whose hangings paled before the more effulgent splendors of these, in all the shining newness of their satin stripes and the tropical luxuriance of the vegetation which spread and flourished thereon, even then, Miss Hatty's brow remained unruffled. And when, with ineffable sweetness and composure, she suggested to Milly Davis that they should hurry up with the work, so that the hanging of the paper might be begun at once, that humble handmaiden was speechless with astonished and adoring wonder.

On the eventful Friday which was to decide the fate of the offending Pillows, Mr. Bascom, alighting from the Boston train, was surprised to find his sister waiting for him on the platform.

"Hello, Hatty!" he said, holding out a brotherly hand. "How are you?"

"Very well, thank you, Sam," replied Miss Hatty. "I



thought you'd be on that train, so I walked down to meet you. Milly's at the shop."

"Very good of you, I'm sure," said Sam, heartily, wondering within himself.

"I thought," Miss Hatty went on, putting up her little rose-colored parasol, and walking beside him demurely, "I thought that you might go down town before coming up to

the house, and I'd better see you first—you might like to know I've hung the paper, Sam."

"By Jove, you have!" cried her brother, stopping short to look at her. She lifted her eyes to his with a dovelike innocence and calm in their clear depths.

"Yes, I've hung the paper," she repeated, gently. "So you won't, you won't do anything about the Pillows, will you, Sam?"

"Why, no, no, of course I sha'n't, not if you've hung the paper; I promised you, didn't I? Dan Pillow little knows what he owes you, though!" he laughed. "It's a pretty good bargain for you all round, seems to me, eh, Hatty?"

Then, glancing at the pure outline of her cheek as she moved meekly beside him in the rosy shadow of the parasol, he was smitten with sudden remorse and admiration.

"You're a good woman, Hatty! You certainly are!" he said. "You didn't want to give in and put up that paper, now, did you?"

"No," confessed Miss Hatty, "I didn't want to, Sam."

"It's too bad—I declare it is! But you'll get used to it. I warrant you it won't be long before you're actually fond of it. I don't believe you mind it now as much as you thought you would, eh?"

She smiled at him, gently.

"I think," she admitted, "that it *does* look better than I thought it would at first."

"Bravo!" he cried, well pleased. "And now I must leave you, my dear. I have some errands to do; but I'll be up in time for supper, and then we'll have a look at your gorgeousness. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye," said his sister, delicately adjusting the ruffle on her arm which his careless touch had disturbed. "Six o'clock; don't be late, Sam!"

He was not late. He came bouncing merrily into the little shop—very like the traditional bull among the china—at a quarter before six, to find both his sister and Milly Davis awaiting him there, the latter in a tremor of obvious excitement and apprehension.

"Hallo, Hatty!" he cried. "Supper ready? I'm hungry as a hunter. Made it all right with Pillow, and there's no telling when I shall see a cent of his money, thanks to you!"

Well, let's have a look at the paper; I'm as curious as a youngster to see it!"

"Yes?" said Miss Hatty, with a little upward inflection of her soft voice. She finished drying the coins which she had just dipped out of the china bowl, and dropped them into the till; then she opened the door of the parlor, and, the others following her, they all went in together.



"What!" said Sam, staring about him, bewildered. The vague, soft, brownish coloring of the walls showed dimly in the gathering twilight. "I thought you said you'd hung it, Hatty!"

"So I have, Sam," returned his sister, regarding it with a serene and gentle gaze. "So I have hung it."

"But—why—there's some mistake, then!" he cried.

"This isn't the paper I ordered! That was the liveliest paper in all Boston. There were birds on it, and flowers, and—"

"O, Mr. Bascom!" cried Milly, wildly, no longer able to control the tumult of her feelings, "They're all there—the flowers and the birds and everything—they're there, only you can't see 'em, because—because—they're on the other side!"

Mr. Bascom turned a slow, incredulous stare upon his sister.

"Hatty!" he said, "you had that paper put up—*wrong side out?*"

The color in Miss Hatty's transparent cheek would have shamed the efforts of the pink parasol and the sunshine combined.

"Why, yes," she said, lifting her eyes to his face with angelic innocence and candor, "I didn't suppose it mattered *how* I hung it, so long as I hung it at all. And I liked it better this way, Sam!"

There was a moment's silence. Then Mr. Bascom broke into a roar of laughter that rattled the astonished teacups on the shelves.

"I give in!" he shouted. "I give in, Hatty! You've beaten me twice over! And I might have known you would. I vow I'll never try to get the better of you again! Go call in the Pillows—ask 'em to supper. Let's have a celebration! It's worth it to me if I never get another cent on that mortgage. Hatty, Hatty—what a woman you are—what a woman you are!"

A little smile curved the corners of Miss Hatty's delicate lips.

"I thought you'd be pleased, Sam," she said, demurely. "Milly, set the table for two more, and go and ask Mrs. Pillow if she and Mr. Pillow will be good enough to come in to tea!"





THE Silver Lute: A Tale of Cavaliers and Roundheads, by James Workman*



WHEN the news arrived that the King's forces were coming to besiege Moor Hall, I, Captain John Watson, obtained leave of absence from the Governor to visit the house of worthy Master Isaiah Goodwin, to whose daughter, Mistress Patience, I had been recently betrothed. I knew that Master Goodwin was absent from home, but I longed to have a few words with Mistress Patience before the arrival of the King's forces separated us perhaps for months, or, as it might well prove in those perilous times, for ever.

Master Goodwin was a man of substance and integrity, a grave and worthy gentleman, walking most circumspectly in the sight of all men. It was said—though, indeed, I could scarce credit it—that he had been somewhat light-minded in his youth; but that he had turned away for ever from the vanities of this world since the death of his young wife, a beautiful Maid of Honour, who had wedded him in spite of the opposition of her family, and even, it was reported, of the Queen herself. Patience was but a babe when her mother died, and she had been brought up under his own eye. He hath confided to me, though few would have conceived it possible who looked at his cold, unsmiling features, that his affection for her was so deep as to be in his eyes well-nigh a sin, and that he greatly feared that it might tempt him to fail in his duty towards her. Therefore was he sparing of praise and prodigal of reproof, and so rarely did the tenderness that dwelt in his heart manifest itself in word or look that I think she had scarce any knowledge of its existence.

*From Cassell's Magazine.

He exhorted me, both for her welfare and mine, to adopt the same manner towards her; but, indeed, I found it almost impossible to do so.

I think I see her now in her dove-coloured raiment moving about her household duties with sober step and downcast eyes. In obedience to her father's advice, I would strive not to look at her, lest I should minister to that vanity from which none of us, more especially the female sex, are wholly free. Yet ever and anon she would perceive my eyes resting upon her, and her own would begin to twinkle, and it was as though a beam of sunshine had fallen upon her face—to me, both then and now—the sweetest God ever fashioned. Ay, truly; that sweet face, with its dimpled cheeks and rose-red lips and merry, gentle eyes, so moved me that in her presence I could scarce restrain myself from uttering foolish words of praise and affection.

The last time we had met there had been some small dispute between us; but I trusted that the news of the enemy's approach would have reached her, and that I should find her in a sad and chastened mood. I soon reached the house, which was but three or four miles from Moor Hall, and leaving my horse in charge of a serving man, I stepped quietly along the passage to the chamber in which I usually found Patience engaged with her needle. Then I opened the door and stood with hands uplifted, struck dumb and motionless with astonishment and dismay.

Near the window sat her cousin, Dick Greville, playing upon the lute, while Patience, not attired, as was her wont, in sober dove-coloured garments, but tricked out in a gay silk gown, with jewels in her curled and perfumed hair and around her neck and arms, was tripping to and fro about the chamber. I could scarce believe my eyes, and yet there could be no mistake.

Patience was *dancing!*

As I write, that picture rises up before me. The sunshine came with the rose-scented breeze through the open casement, laughing among the flying curls and the gems that flashed and quivered on her white neck and slender wrists. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks were flushed and dimpling with merriment; her slim figure, robed in shimmering silk, gay with bright-coloured ribbons, swayed here and there with infinite ease and grace, and her little feet slid out and in, and went

pit, pat, pat upon the polished oaken floor. And as she went gliding to and fro, swift and light and supple, twang, twang went the lute, and through the open casement came the sweet singing of birds.

Often in these later years do I find myself recalling the memory of that scene; for I thought it then, and think it still (and may say bluntly that I am not ashamed to confess it) the fairest sight that ever I saw in my life. But I looked and spoke as if it were far otherwise; for, fair as it seemed to me, I was shocked beyond expression, having been taught to regard such exercises as worldly and profane, snares strewn in the path of those who walk unwarily.

"Patience, Patience!" I exclaimed, "what means this?"

The pattering feet, the twanging lute, stopped instantly—nay, it seemed as though the very birds ceased to twitter, so profound was the silence. Gazing at me in speechless consternation were two pale faces, from which the smiles had passed like breath from a mirror, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, speaking most eloquently of bewilderment and alarm. Then Patience flushed scarlet, and with a half laugh, half cry, buried her face in her hands, though I could see her bright eyes sparkling saucily through her parted fingers. As for her cousin Dick, he rose to his feet and regarded me with a red and foolish countenance.

"It is well for you, Master Dick," said I grimly, "that it was I, and not Master Goodwin, who caught you at these fine pranks. These are pretty goings-on, forsooth, in a sober and virtuous household!"

The boy flushed angrily.

"Why, what evil do you see in Cousin Patience dancing to the music of the lute?" he asked hotly. "Truly, you might as well find fault with a bird for singing, or a butterfly for sipping honey from a flower."

"Indeed," I answered drily, "I think she looks more like a butterfly than a grave and sensible maid. Where got you this fine gown, and all these gew-gaws, and ribbons, and so forth, Mistress Patience? Sure your worthy father knows naught of this?"

Patience uncovered her face, and drew herself up proudly.

"They were my mother's," said she. "She wore them when she was a Maid of Honour at the Court in days when it was thought no crime to wear a silk gown, or a ribbon, or even,

Captain Watson, to honour and obey the King. What she wore, I think her daughter may wear also without reproach from you or anyone."

Now, looking back, I think I might very well have held my peace; but in those days, I own, my tongue was ever ready to administer reproof, even, perhaps, when I stood much in need of it myself.

"That may be," said I; "yet I warrant she wore them not that she might trip and skip in them like a play-actress to the music of the lute. As for you, Master Greville, I think that at a time like this, when those who love freedom and liberty of conscience are shedding their blood for the Cause, you might sure find better employment than to make merry in a lady's chamber with such wanton toys as this."

I pointed to the lute with a gesture of contempt, and Dick flushed crimson with anger.

"Sir," said he, "let me tell you that I have better authority for keeping the sword sheathed than you have for drawing it; and, sure, 'tis as pleasing in God's sight to enjoy His good gifts, and to make merry in the fair world He hath made for our delight, as to deface His image upon the battlefield. Yet, if you think that it is fear that withholds my hand from taking part in the bloody and barbarous game of war, I am ready to give you proof to the contrary when and where you will."

'Twas a boyish speech, perhaps, and well-nigh laughable to think that he should be prepared to uphold his love of peace at the sword's point; yet, in spite of my ill-temper, I could not but own to myself that the lad had a gallant air, and in a happier mood I would have passed off the matter with a smile. As it was, I answered him with some asperity.

"Tut, tut," said I, "think you I would draw my sword in a private quarrel, or that if I did so I would use it against one who, though he may have the years of a man, hath not yet learned to put away childish things?"

Whereupon his eyes flashed wrathfully, and he took a step towards me; but Patience laid her hand on his arm and whispered a word in his ear, and with a shrug of the shoulders he turned and stepped through the window into the sunlit garden beyond.

So Patience and I were left alone; and when I ventured once more to expostulate she answered me warmly, and I replying

in like manner, things were said on both sides, I own it with shame, that were neither kind nor seemly. In the end she stamped her little foot upon the floor, and faced me with flashing eyes.

"I know not by what right you presume to exercise authority over me, sir," she exclaimed petulantly; "but let me tell you that I will do what seems fitting in my own eyes, whether it should happen to please you or not."

So saying, she began like a wilful child to skip and twirl once more about the chamber until, pausing for want of breath, she stood panting, and eyeing me with an expression of merry defiance.

I do not know what I should have said or done if there had not come, as she paused, the sound of the loud clapping of hands from the door and casement. Swiftly wheeling round, I perceived a sight that filled me with dismay and bewilderment. I was confronted by the grinning faces of a company of the King's soldiers, who had noiselessly surrounded the house while I stood wrangling with Patience. In a moment they were upon me, but quick as they were I had my back against the wall and my sword in my hand. I heard Patience scream as the blades clashed and rang, and I struck and thrust, and parried with the fury of despair. But what could any man breathing do against such odds? They hemmed me in on every side. Turn which way I would, I was met by the glimmer of naked steel. Yet for awhile, I know not how I contrived it, I kept them at bay; and then, emboldened by my success, made a dash forward, hoping to cut my way through and so escape. But my foot slipped on the oaken floor, and I fell on one knee. As I struggled to my feet, a blow on the head half stunned me. One clutched me from behind, others seized my arms, and the sword was wrenched from my grasp. In the extremity of my despair I flung them aside and made a rush towards the casement; but again they threw themselves upon me, and I was hurled bleeding and senseless to the floor.

When I came to myself I was dragged roughly to my feet. My hands were bound behind me; and I was led before the officer in command, a gaily attired young gallant, who lolled negligently in an arm-chair and eyed me with a cool, insolent smile.

"You are Captain Watson, of the garrison of Moor Hall, are you not?" said he.

"Yes," I answered, wondering as I spoke how he came to know my name and station. Sure someone must have informed him, for I had never set eyes on him before. Was it possible that I had been betrayed? Ay, truly was it, for in those evil days many a better man than I had met with such a fate. But by whom? Then swift as thought it was borne in upon me that there was only one man who could gain aught by delivering me into the hands of the enemy, and that was none other than Master Dick Greville. I had long suspected that he cherished a more than cousinly regard for Mistress Patience, and therefore could not endure that I should have speech alone with her. He had left me in anger, with fierce looks and bitter words, and plainly consumed by spite and jealousy. Doubtless he had known that the enemy were in the neighbourhood, and had promptly informed them of my presence.

And then—ah, may no such black moment ever darken my life again!—I remembered how Patience had whispered in his ear as he left the chamber, and I could scarce stifle a groan of despair. Was it possible that she, too, was in the plot, had grown weary of my solemn face and grave airs, and had leagued with him to betray me? I glanced hastily round. She was not present, and my heart sank within me.

"Well, sir," continued the officer in his cool, quiet voice, "I must take the liberty of reminding you that there is nothing in your attire to indicate your rank or profession. In brief, I find you within our lines in disguise, and am justified in regarding you as a spy, and stringing you without ceremony to the nearest tree."

I confess that my blood ran cold at his words. I had hitherto forgotten that I was attired as a plain country gentleman, and might consequently be treated as a spy by the enemy. And yet it angered me that so baseless an accusation should be brought against me.

"I am no spy, and that you know right well, sir," I exclaimed indignantly; "and if you treat me otherwise than as a prisoner of war you will assuredly be called to account for it."

Whereupon he shrugged his shoulders with a contemptuous gesture.

"Pshaw!" said he, "I have quite sufficient evidence to satisfy myself that you are a spy, and only your bare word for it that you are not one. Therefore I shall deal with you as I think fit, and in a way that will be little to your liking, unless—" he paused and eyed me with a meaning look—"unless you are prepared to prove that you have seen the error of your ways, and have once more become a loyal subject of the King."

"In other words," said I, "you would have me play the traitor?"

"As you will," he answered impatiently. "I will not bandy words with you, but will deal very plainly with you and be done with it. There is, so I am informed, a secret passage into the Hall, by which it is possible the garrison may be surprised and the place taken. If you instantly agree to point out that passage, your life shall be spared; if not, as sure as you stand there before me you shall be hanged as a spy. Come, time presses. What is your answer—yes or no?"

There was but one answer possible, and that I gave.

"No," said I; but though I held my head high and spoke out bravely, I shame not to acknowledge that my heart sank within me. I have faced death on the battlefield—I can say it without vanity—as readily as most men; but to die with a rope about my neck, to be thrust into an unknown and dishonored grave—that, I own, was a fate that I found it no easy task to meet with becoming fortitude. But not for one moment, thank God! did I dream of escaping it by betraying the cause I loved, nor, I humbly trust and believe, did my countenance exhibit any signs of unmanly fear.

The officer glanced carelessly at the clock.

"'Tis yet some minutes to the hour," said he. "If by the time the clock strikes four you alter your mind and agree to point out the passage, I give you my word of honour that you shall go free and receive a generous reward; but if you still remain obstinate I will have you swung from the nearest tree as I would grim old Oliver himself."

Then he turned to a young man who stood near him.

"Plague take it, cornet," said he, "can you not get me a cup of wine, or at least a flagon of ale? 'Tis thirsty work, this prating. And, hark ye, what hath become of the pretty Puritan who was skipping so merrily about the chamber when

we entered it? Bring her hither, lad. I would have speech with her. By my faith, I never set eyes on a daintier piece of flesh and blood since the brave old days at Whitehall."

A few minutes later a serving man entered with the wine, and close behind him, in her silk gown and jewels, came Patience, not pale and trembling as I had expected, but blushing and smiling and curtsying as though charmed to obey the summons of the handsome young officer. He was instantly on his feet, and removing his plumed hat, approached her with a sweeping bow.

"This is indeed a pleasure," said he. "May I venture to ask your name, my pretty mistress?"

"Patience Goodwin, if it please you, sir," she rejoined with another curtsy.

"By my faith, it pleases me very much," said he, "and I beg that you will honour our poor company with your presence, Mistress Patience, during the short time we remain here."

So saying, he offered her his hand and led her to a seat, simpering and bowing, and uttering the foolish flatteries which such creatures have ever at command to whisper in a lady's ear. Never, I think, in all my life have I endured such misery. My arms were bound, I was face to face with death—a shameful and dishonourable death—and I stood there helpless, watching this fine, swaggering gallant make open love to her I had hoped would one day become my wife.

Ah, but what cut me to the heart was the conduct of Patience herself. Scarce a glance she cast at me, but laughed and jested with my executioners, even consenting to drink the health of the King to curry favour, as it seemed, with these rollicking swashbucklers. Sure, I had not thought that in all the wide world a maid could have been found so cold, so cruel and callous. Presently the officer's eye fell upon the lute.

"I doubt not you have some skill in music, Mistress Patience," said he. "May I not beg of you to favour us with a song? If you would be so kind I should be infinitely obliged."

I could scarce stifle a groan, for Patience instantly took up the lute.

"I will do so willingly, sir," said she; "but I fear I shall give but little pleasure to one who is doubtless a judge of such matters."

Her fingers wandered softly over the strings as she played a brief prelude, and I noted that while she did so the young man who had gone to summon her leaned forward and whispered hurriedly in the officer's ear. Whereupon the latter made a swift movement as though about to rise from his seat, but after a quick glance at the clock he seemed to change his mind, and sat drumming lightly on the table with his fingers as though keeping time to the music, while his keen eyes were fixed on Patience with a peculiar smile. For a moment I thought she grew pale as he watched her, and that her fingers trembled on the strings; but if it were so, she instantly recovered her self-possession and began to sing. Then, indeed, strange as it may seem, I forgot all else. I had never heard her sing before, and truly, I think, never thrush or nightingale had a sweeter or truer voice.

Clear and pure the sweet voice rang out, and instantly every other sound was hushed as if by magic, and I saw the rugged, bronzed faces of the troopers gathering about the open casement. Even the officer's cold face seemed to soften, and as for me, my heart melted within me, and the tears rose to my eyes. It was not, I think, the words that moved me, nor even the music, though writ, as I have been told, by that most excellent musician, Master Henry Lawes. 'Twas something in the tones of the clear young voice that aroused memories of the dear faces I should never see again, of the joys and sorrows I had known, of the hopes I had vainly cherished, of all the sadness and the sweetness of my brief pilgrimage upon the earth.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried the officer, slapping the table with his open hand. "Right well sung. By my word, my pretty Puritan, you sing like an angel, and if Heaven be peopled with such I will henceforth amend my ways in the hope of getting there. And yet I know not whether I would sooner hear you sing, or see you trip and glide about the floor as you did so charmingly when we had the good fortune to enter the chamber. When the King enjoys his own again we must have you at Whitehall; and I promise you there will not be one to outshine you among all the fair ladies of the Court. Truly I grieve that my duty compels me to bid you farewell for the present, but I trust we shall soon meet again."

"Nay, nay," she exclaimed eagerly, "I pray you go not yet. Sure you are not in such haste that you may not tarry

a little longer? I know yet another song that in truth I think will please you. 'Twas writ by Master Wither, and few know it save I. Stay but a moment and I will sing it to you."

Verily I was sick at heart with shame and grief to hear her speak thus; and prayed that God might forgive her for her levity and coldness of heart, and was almost glad to die. But as she was about to take up the lute the officer laid his hand on her arm with a strange, ironical smile, and I saw her face grow white as she shrank back, and gazed at him with wide, frightened eyes.

"Not so, my fair mistress," said he. "I would not tarry one instant longer were you the Queen of Love herself, and I will tell you why."

As he spoke he glanced with a grim smile at the clock. "You have played your part well, Mistress Patience," he continued. "By this time your messenger that the cornet here saw scampering across the fields like a rabbit has no doubt reached Moor Hall, and the Roundheads are in the saddle ready to ride to the rescue. But they will come too late, let me tell you. Ah, you turn pale and tremble! You thought you had tricked me very prettily—eh? Not so, if it please you. Corporal, find a fitting tree, and get the rope ready."

Then as I looked at the pitiful white face of Mistress Patience, her outstretched, trembling hands, her appealing, tear-filled eyes, I perceived the truth as last. During all the time I had supposed her to be given up to cruel and heartless frivolity she had but been striving to lure my captors into forgetfulness until help arrived. And Dick—whom I had so ungenerously misjudged—was no doubt the messenger who, at the risk of his life, had darted away to bring my comrades to the rescue.

Then Patience fell on her knees before him, the tears trickling down her pale cheeks. He tried to put her gently aside, but she clung to his hands and would not let go him.

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no! you shall not go until you promise me to spare his life. He is not guilty; you know right well he is not guilty. Oh, sir, be merciful! Give me your promise. Sure you will not refuse me; you have not the heart to refuse me!"

■ I know not whether his heart melted at the sight, or whether he had from the first but threatened me with death in order to induce me to point out the passage; but suddenly calling to

the troopers to follow him, he rushed from the room. An instant later he flashed past the casement on his horse, with his men clattering at his heels. Off they went like birds on the wing, brave to a fault when need be, but wary as brave, ever ready to drink a health, to kiss a maid, to scout and skirmish and foray, or charge home with reckless daring. Such, as I knew them, were these gallant cavaliers, wild, careless, jovial, and, I fear, too often profligate, but ever an enemy that it was an honor to meet face to face on the battlefield. Mounted on swift, light horses, they contrived to evade our more heavily armed troopers, and so escaped.

In the meantime Patience had quickly unbound my hands; and I would have hurried out to take part in the chase, but she held me back.

"Oh, John," she said, "you will forgive me, will you not? And I will never wear silks or jewels, or dance or sing again."

I took her hands in mine, and looked down at her fondly; but I think she could not see the expression upon my face for the tears that blinded her eyes.

"I will be grave and quiet enough from henceforth, John," she said pitifully. "I thought they would have slain you and that you would never know that, however foolish and vain I may be, I ever truly loved you. Oh, I have been taught a lesson this day—indeed, indeed I have!"

"Nay, it is I who have been taught the lesson, sweetheart," said I; "and I thank God He hath spared my life that I may profit by it. Who am I that I should presume to scorn the good gifts which He hath bestowed upon us—the delight in sweet sounds and graceful motions—ay, even in fair raiment and precious stones? If one so pure in heart as you, child, can take innocent pleasure in such things, they can never again seem evil in my eyes. So wear your silks and jewels, and play and sing as you will; and as for Dick—"

"Ay," said a laughing voice, "what of Dick?"

I looked up and saw his merry face gazing in at us from the casement, framed by the red and white roses that clustered upon the wall.

"Why, Dick," said I, "shall dance at our wedding;" and we all three laughed, and none more gaily than I.



ZULFAN: The Story of a Mohammedan Girl, by Howard Fisher*

PIR Mohammed Shafi sat on his roof telling his beads and saying his prayers. "God is good! God is good! There is but one God and Mohammed is his Prophet!" His eyes had a new light in them, the stern fire of the Mohammedan enthusiast and mystic was tempered with anxiety, and with love for the wife whom the midwife had in charge below. A child was being born into the world, and the prophet had been banished to the roof. "God grant that it be a boy," he prayed, "grant that it be a boy!" And again the beads flew through the nervous fingers of the anxious man. "God is good! God is good!" Surely his prayers would be heard and answered according to the desire of his heart. Had not the dai (midwife) assured him that it would be a son? Thrice had he dreamed that it would be so. Had he not long prayed for this one thing? And see! the new moon! the star and crescent of Mohammed! Had it ever been so bright as on this natal night? Was he not a priest of the great Prophet? Had not his father and his father's father served in this same priesthood? Was his star not then linked with that of the great master, and was not that star now in the ascendant?

He turned his eyes from the brilliant crescent and rested them lovingly on the huge dome of the Delhi musjid (mosque) all flooded with the moonlight. How often he had read the prayers, how often he had preached within those walls. God willing, his son should take his place and stand where so often he had stood. Dreams? No! Was he not called Pir, prophet of Mohammed?

*Written for Short Stories.

Wrapped in his thoughts, confident that the dai's predictions and his own visions would be fulfilled, he sat silent, thinking of the happy hours to come, when he on this same roof would unfold to his son the mystery and lessons of the blessed Koran.

Soft was the moonlight, balmy the midnight air, all laden with the perfume and fragrance of an India springtime. The city lay below him wrapped in sleep. Even the dogs had ceased their baying. Shadows fell softly on the houses round about, hiding scars that the midday sun delighted to expose. The checkered parapets, newly whitewashed, took on the tints of purest marble. Over by the grove of banyan trees the great bathing pool, dark and sombre here, glistening there, the star and crescent mirrored on its bosom, seemed crystal pure water instead of the foul and stagnant thing it was. Beyond the Agra gate, the trunk road leading to Cantonments shone white and hard between the shrubs and trees that bordered it on either side. How it glared in the fierce India sun! How cool it seemed to-night!

From the Hindu quarter, as though a challenge to the musjid, the white temple of the Jains with golden peaked spire and fantastic pictures of the heathen gods, stood out like some rich cameo, clear cut against the cloudless sky.

How sweet, how tranquil, how perfect the night! "God is good! God is good!" The beads slipped from the fingers' grasp, the head drooped and the prophet slept, to dream of a new-born son, a revival of the faith; a Jihad (holy war) that should end in triumph over both idolator and Christian.

Down below, in the women's quarters, all was bustle and excitement. Charms and amulets and prayers were hung around the sick wife's bed. The little room was filled with women; kinsfolk, friends and helpers. Platters of sweets, betel and native delicacies were being passed from guest to guest. Near the walls were placed basins and lotas of water. On a charpai (bed) were laid out little silken pajamas, dainty silken coat and cap all trimmed with glittering beads and golden braid, the pride and handiwork of the invalid.

"See, sisters, see!" cried one, taking up the little suit, "how pretty the boy will look!" Even as she spoke, another clapped her hand over the speaker's mouth and angrily rebuked her.

"How dare you, Zulfan! Have you lost your wit that you

“speak so before the child is born? Do you not know that such words will bring misfortune, or have you knowingly done this thing?” A smothered titter escaped from some, others shook their heads at the ill-omen, the ill-timed words.

“Forgive me,” broke in the ardent Zulfan, “I meant no harm! You know I meant no harm!”

But the dais would not have it so. Had they not seen evil come from just such words? They had promised that it should be a boy, but to speak so plainly would surely bring bad luck. They were in command and she must not remain within the room, lest she cast an evil eye upon the mother or speak some other thoughtless word.

At last the suspense and waiting were over. The good God, and not the Devil, had sent a baby girl to bless the childless couple. The dais cast furtive glances at each other and held their tongues for once. They were chagrined and disappointed. They dared not tell the mother nor the master. They would get no rich present now, only their fee and with it much abuse. The little babe was almost roughly laid to one side and neglected, and obsequious attention paid the mother.

“Amiram,” whispered the sick woman, alarmed at the silence of her nurse, “tell me, is it a—” she could say no more, she dared not say the word.

“No, Bibi” (mistress), “the crazy Zulfan spoiled it all with her evil tongue. But, see, Bibi, it is a dear little thing, perfect in every way. It will be a great beauty,” and Amiram reached over to show the mother her babe, her first and only child.

“No, no, take it away, I cannot see it now. Oh! the Master, the Master, what will he say?” Sobbing with her emotion, the unhappy mother turned her face to the wall and would say no more. She cared not whether she lived or died. Her husband would cease to love her. Only a girl!

The women offered her no congratulations. Silent, or in whispering groups, they gathered near the doorway. By look and gesture Zulfan was made to feel that she was the cause of the disappointment. The old mother-in-law heaped abuse upon her. She lashed her with her tongue until Zulfan, unable to endure it any longer, turned upon her tormentor.

"I meant no wrong and did no wrong. You are a set of superstitious fools. You are the wicked ones. Look, the little one still cries and yet not a finger is raised to comfort her. Shame upon you. Are you, too, not women, were you not little once, girls, babies? The Padri's wife says truly that it is our own fault we women are what we are, the servants and slaves of our husbands. The bachcha (baby) cries, I say; will you comfort it or shall I?" Ashamed, astonished at her words, they stood dumb, while she, suiting action to words, took up the friendless infant and hushed it to sleep. It was Zulfan now who was mistress. "Go!" she said, "go send word to the Pir-sahib." But not a hand or foot was moved. Who would carry such news as theirs to the waiting father?

"Cowards!" said Zulfan. "Were it proper, I myself would go." "Amiram, it is you with your foolish predictions that have filled the Pir-sahib's heart so full with the certainty of a son that there is no room for a daughter. Go you and tell the father!" Glad to have the burden fixed upon others than themselves, servants, dais, even the mother-in-law joined in the command, and Amiram, slowly and reluctantly, dreading to break the news, quitted the room and mounted the stairs to the roof.

Along the eastern sky the first faint light of approaching day was breaking up the night. The birds began to twitter. From a minaret of the mosque came the Muezzin's call to prayers, awakening the sleeper from his dreams of sonship and triumph. Smiling and light of heart, he turned toward the rising sun and knelt in prayer. But the smile that lighted upon his face darkened to a frown when from the Hindu temple as though to mock him, came the clash of a score of bells, and the conch shells' mournful bellow. The Brahmin priests were waking up their gods. Faint and sweet, yet full of meaning, upon the morning breeze came the English bugler's reveille, reminding him of the hated English yoke, of a glory that once belonged to the followers of the Prophet. The frown deepened, the eyes, deep set, glowed with suppressed emotion. He turned to leave the roof and there before him, prostrate on her knees, hands clasped before her face, her eyes cast down, was Amiram, the *dai*.

"Huzur!" she said, "Huzur!" but could proceed no further. In an instant he grasped the significance of her

posture, of her faltering tongue. His visions were dreams. Hope fled. The disappointment of his life had come. Commanding himself lest a woman should see his emotion, he hastened to reply.

"It is enough; go, bring the child!" Glad to escape so easily, Amiram hastened below.

"Quick, the bachcha," she said, "the Master is coming and will see it." Trusting that the father's heart would be softened and warmed at sight of the little one, Zulfan yielded up her charge, and the dai hurried out. Silently she placed her burden in the parent's arms, silently he bowed his head, kissed its brow and returned it to the nurse.

"God is good!" he muttered with the resignation of his faith, and then, "Its mother, Dai, is she doing well? The law forbids that I should see her now, but take her my salaams and congratulations and let no ill befall her. If I am needed, send to the mosque."

Seated in their dolis (sedan chairs) with curtains closed and burqa drawn over face and form, the women took their departure, and the household resumed somewhat of its accustomed routine.

Days slipped into weeks and weeks to years. The little Zulfan, for she was so called, was bright of mind and warm of heart. Unmindful of the day when the parda system would claim her for its own and hedge her around, she played at will in the courtyard or the alley close at hand. Seated astride her father's hips, she visited the bazaars so full of interest and life with its ever changing scenes. Now and then, with mahout seated cross-legged upon his neck, an elephant would come blundering along, his big ears going flap, flap, his small eyes twinkling with merriment as the people stepped nimbly by to let him pass. Again an endless train of camels, all laden with bags of wheat, slipped softly along to the warehouse of baniya Lala Singh. Always there was the mitai-wala to be visited, where her little fists and mouth were stuffed full of native sweets. No less interesting was the evening stroll out on the great trunk road, on which her father sometimes took her, where she could see the Sahib-log (English) the lords of the land, in their grand equipages and strange garments.

But she soon learned to fear what now so interested her. One day the Civil Surgeon's Chaprasi came to see her father.

To Zulfan he was surely some very important individual, the bearer of important news. His bright red coat was resplendent with golden braid. The sash across his breast, holding the shining lettered plate of his office, was equally gorgeous. The winter's tour of vaccination was at hand, and the Civil Surgeon was bent on seeing it most thoroughly performed. He would stamp the smallpox from his district and Zulfan, along with other children, must be vaccinated. Resistance was useless, for the Sirkar (government) had a hard and long-reaching hand. Besides, the father was too wise not to see the wisdom of the order. He had seen too many sightless eyes, too many ruined ears and scarred faces.

On the morrow, in deference to his rank, and secretly hoping for a bakhshish for their concession, two inspectors called at the prophet's gate. Into the little courtyard, in the order of their rank, they stepped, and behind them, almost too exhausted to walk, its bones all but cutting through the skin, was dragged and pushed a buffalo calf. Roughly they tied its legs, roughly they threw the sick beast over on its side. Zulfan, screaming and frightened, held tightly in her father's arms, was scratched and cut with the knife. The pustule on the calf's belly was opened, the virus applied to the smarting arm. In three places they left the marks of their handiwork. Such were their orders, for the government would take no risks; and then one victim was taken to the zanana to be comforted by a waiting mother, the other dragged away to further torture.

Poor little Zulfan! Her first trial had come and gone. Her father and the Civil Surgeon had saved her from the smallpox, would her father's wisdom help her in the days to come?

Conscious of the benefit and pleasure that the Padri's wife gave her, the godmother, Zulfan, planned and schemed that her young friend, now some ten years old, should share her lessons. It took a long time and many kisses and entreaties from the little maid before the father gave his consent, for he was of the old school, holding hard to the traditions of the past, seeing only harm for women in a greater freedom and enlightenment than they now possessed. However, the girl might have her way, he could surely take good care that the Christian's teaching did not sink too deeply. Twice a week, under the old ayah's charge, she visited the elder

Zulfan's house to hear the Gospel read, to learn her Urdu, her figures and the art of sewing. Now and then the zanana worker called on Zulfan and her mother, and many a keen discussion had the father and the memsahib.

What the memsahib taught his daughter about Christ and Christianity the parent straightway untaught. It was monstrous even to think that God should have a son. Was he as mortal men that he should have a wife? Christ was a good man, but son of God—never! It was a blasphemy. No, the Christian was in error; the true Ingil (Gospel) had been lost. God is God, there is but one God, and Mohammed is his Prophet.

To fill her with the bigotry and pride of her race and faith, he told the stories of the old-time glory of the Moghul, when her fathers and not the English ruled in India; stories of Cadijah, of the beautiful Ayeshah, the child wife of Mohammed; of Fatima and the beloved Nur Mahal, wife of the great Shah Jahangir. He kept her Mohammedan heart and soul. She was his daughter and he was priest and prophet of Mohammed.

But the days had come when she was no longer a child, days when the zanana laid hold upon her with its rigid rules. The girl had grown a woman, and how glorious she was in her young womanhood, how dear to her father now. Lithe and graceful of limb and body, with clear cut features, olive tinted skin and deep brown eyes, she was a woman that mothers would be sure to seek in marriage for their sons, a woman whose beauty no man, save her own father or her husband, might look upon. She was a *parda nashin*.

It was midsummer and the rains had just begun. Pir Mohammed Shafi sat on his roof and thought of his daughter. She was ill, seriously ill, and the good man knew not what to do. The moon shone just as brightly as it did one spring-time eighteen years ago, but the perfume was not the same as then. The blossoms of the orange and shrubs had been withered and blown away by the burning *luh* (winds) and in their stead came the reek of refuse from the stables round about, and of filth in the alley just below. Not a breath of air was stirring. It was hot; hot and humid as only India knew how to be.

For months Zulfan had been ailing. Dais, native hakims

(doctors), English patent medicines bought in the bazaar, charms and verses from the Koran, had all been tried in vain. Monsoon weather was aggravating the malady, and father, mother and old ayah were greatly distressed. The air and heat within doors were unendurable; so, stretched upon her charpai, into the courtyard she was borne and there mother and ayah, squatting on either side, fanned her and ministered to her wants.

"Mother," said Zulfan, "my strength is slipping from me fast; see how thin my hand. Mother, shall we not send for the Doctor-sahib? The memsahib has urged it many times; our desi (native) medicines have done no good."

"But, Zulfan, even if I consented, what would your father say? You know that he has no love for the English. Remember, too, that you are a *parda* woman and that the Doctor-sahib cannot see you." Tears filled the sick girl's eyes. She was too tired to argue or to press her request.

"Oh, child! child!" said the mother, stirred by her daughter's tears. "What can we women do? We are what Zulfan said of us when you were born, slaves and servants, shut up within Zanana walls, lest we betray our husbands or do some other wicked thing. But, dear heart, you shall have your wish. I have said it. The Doctor-sahib will come." Long and earnestly the parents talked that night. It meant expense of purse that they could ill afford. It meant the prying of the hated foreigner into their inner life. It ended with a message to the Civil Surgeon.

There were three of them who bore it, well dressed, native gentlemen, relatives of the Pir-sahib.

"Huzur," said the speaker, addressing the Civil Surgeon as he sat on his verandah, "the Pir-sahib, Mohammed Shafi sends his bahut, bahut salaams and begs that you come to see his daughter who is very ill. Huzur need not bother to order his cart; our own is at his service."

Should he go? His own bungalow was so cool, his day's work just finished. The city was still ablaze with heat, its many smells were stifling. Should he go? And then came thoughts of wife and daughter, strong and well in the Simla Hills. Rising, he questioned the speaker: "Who is Mohammed Shafi? Is the girl really very ill? I have been called to

the city before on a fool's errand. Will not the native doctor, my assistant, do?"

'No, Sahib, the assistant would not do. Huzur was a great doctor. The girl was very ill. Huzur's kindness was known all over the city. Huzur's fee should be paid then and there.' Their importunity knew no bounds.

Reluctantly, the Civil Surgeon promised them what skill he had and, piloted by his captors, was soon threading the mazes of a native city. Often had he driven through the great bazaars; seldom had he ventured into such by-ways and alleys as he now trod. Holding his nose and gasping for breath, he wondered to what hidden spot they were leading him. Before a pair of rough doors they stopped and knocked. Some bolts were quickly drawn and they were ushered into a little courtyard, Zulfan's old time playground; her sick chamber now.

With undisguised curiosity, the Sahib gazed about him. On all four sides were high brick walls, walls whose blankness was only broken here and there by little windows, built to let but a feeble ray of light into the apartments just beyond. The whole place was suggestive of dark deeds, of suffering, imprisoned women, and the doctor's thoughts went back to the tales of his long forgotten Arabian Nights.

Rising from his cushion and rug and relinquishing the hookah that had filled the court with its odor, the father, salaaming and dignified, came forward to meet his guest.

'Huzur was very kind to come. Would Huzur have some sherbet? Some mita pani (lemonade)? Would Huzur cause his distinguished person to seat itself?'

"No, thank you, Pir-sahib!" hastily replied the surgeon. "But tell me what is wrong with my patient and then let me see her."

Briefly, the father told him what he knew, and then added: "Will Huzur bring his presence this way?"

Before a large parda they placed a chair and with many apologies explained the situation.

"Huzur may not see her, she is a parda woman, Sahib. She lies behind the curtain. Will Huzur question her?"

The physician was disgusted, and Zulfan, timid and frightened now that the Englishman sat so near, increased his displeasure by her inarticulate replies. Hot and tired, unable

to comprehend the situation, half angrily he turned upon the parent. "Pir-sahib, this is sheer nonsense. I can accomplish nothing. Either you must let me see my patient or I give her up."

Again the father and his friends explained why he could not see her. It was a matter of family honor, a social law that they dared not break. The girl was frightened. If Huzur would try again, his question would be answered.

It was his first glimpse into the zanana of a high caste family and he was interested. He would try once more.

"At least I may feel her pulse?"

Yes, that they would allow.

From under the parda a small, bloodless hand was thrust, the tips of the finger nails stained with the inevitable red. The pulse was soft and rapid, the hand hot with fever. Gently the doctor replaced the hand upon the couch and addressed the father.

"Pir-sahib," said he, rising as he spoke, "you have placed me in a very trying situation. I may not see nor examine my patient, Nevertheless, as you say, the girl is very ill and there is but one remedy that will help her. Drugs count for but little in her case. Your daughter must have fresh air. You may take her out in a closed carriage, if you wish, but fresh air and plenty of it she must have. Do you understand?"

"Huzur!"

As the doctor went out from that oven of a courtyard, even the air in the alley seemed fresher and cooler, and he thought to himself:

"Why did the Lord ever send Dives to the lower regions when he had India so close at hand?"

Two days had passed and the Civil Surgeon was making his second call.

"Well, Pir-sahib, how is the daughter?"

"Worse, Doctor-sahib, she has had no rest. The fever burns her up."

"Did you give her the medicine?"

"No, Sahib, the native hakim took it away and gave her something else."

"Did you give her the diet I prescribed?"

"No, sahib, she wanted some native sweets, and we gave them."

"Have you taken her for a drive, or given her a change of air?"

"No, Sahib, my caste would not allow that, she is a parda-nashin. I could not think of it."

"Pir-sahib," said the surgeon, "I came reluctantly, at your earnest entreaty, to see your daughter. You have deliberately ignored what I especially commanded. Pir-sahib, do you really love your daughter? If you do, then act on my advice and give her a change of air. Keep her cooped up in this infernal place, and a few more days will see her dead. Do you understand? Your parda system is killing her. What are you going to do?"

The tears gathered in the father's eyes. "God knows, Sahib, that I love this child, but I cannot do it. I would rather she died, and so would she, than that other than her own people should see her. It is our way, Sahib. It is her kismet."

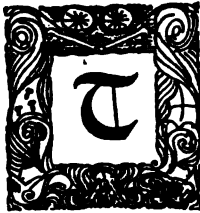
They never called the surgeon again. But the sadness, the hopelessness of it all drew him once more to the city. Again he was threading those hot, stifling streets, and alleys. As he drew near, he knew that Zulfan's kismet had come. Even accustomed as he was to deathbed scenes, he sighed as the lamentations and wailing of women reached him. All the old hags of the city, professional mourners, all Zulfan's female relatives were there, weeping and crying with oriental abandonment.

"Hae! hae! margaya, margaya! (Dead! Dead!)"

In unison they sang their death song. In even cadence their voices rose and fell. Over and over they repeated the refrain.

He stepped to the half-closed door and looked into the court. Around the dead Zulfan, laid upon her bed, and wrapped in a plain white sheet, knelt the women, beating their poor naked breasts and clutching at their streaming hair. Not a man was to be seen. Again the surgeon thought of the wife and daughter in the cool Simla hills.

"Thank God for Christianity!" he muttered, as he turned homeward.



HE Connemara Mare:

A Story of the Dublin Horse Show, by E. OE. Somerville and Martin Ross*



THE gray mare, who had been one of the last, if not the very last, of the sales at the Dublin Horse Show, was not at all happy in her mind.

Still less so was the dealer's understrapper, to whom fell the task of escorting her through the streets of Dublin. Her late owner's groom had assured him that she would "folly him out of his hand, and that whatever she'd see she wouldn't care for it nor ask to look at it."

It cannot be denied, however, that when an electric tram swept past her like a terrace under way, closely followed by a cart laden with a clanking and horrific reaping machine, she showed that she possessed powers of observation. The incident passed off with credit to the understrapper, but when an animal has to be played like a salmon down the length of Lower Mount street, and when it barn-dances obliquely along the north side of Merrion Square, the worst may be looked for in Nassau street.

And it was indeed in Nassau street, and, moreover, in full view of the bow window of Kildare Street Club, that the cup of the understrapper's misfortunes brimmed over. To be sure, he could not know that the new owner of the gray mare was in that window; it was enough for him that a quiescent and unsuspected piano-organ broke with three majestic chords into Mascagni's "Intermezzo" at his very ear, and that, without any apparent interval of time, he was surmounting a heap composed of a newspaper boy, a sandwich man, and a hospital nurse, while his hands held nothing save a red-

*From Longman's Magazine.

hot memory of where the rope had been. The smashing of glass and the clatter of hoofs on the pavement filled in what space was left in his mind for other impressions.

"She's into the hat shop!" said Mr. Rupert Gunning to himself in the window of the club, recognizing his recent purchase and the full measure of the calamity in one and the same moment.

He also recognized in its perfection the fact, already suspected by him, that he had been a fool.

Upheld by this soothing reflection he went out into the street, where awaited him the privileges of proprietorship. These began with the dispatching of the mare, badly cut, and apparently lame on every leg, in charge of the remains of the understrapper, to her destination. They continued with the consolation of the hospital nurse, and embraced in varying pecuniary degrees the compensation of the sandwich man, the newspaper boy, and the proprietor of the hat shop. During all the time he enjoyed the unfaltering attention of a fair-sized crowd; liberal in comment, prolific of imbecile suggestion. And all these things were only the beginning of the trouble.

Mr. Gunning proceeded to his room and to the packing of his portmanteau for that evening's mail-boat to Holyhead in a mood of considerable sourness. It may be conceded to him that circumstances had been of a souring character. He had bought Miss Fanny Fitzroy's gray mare at the Horse Show for reasons of an undeniably sentimental sort. Therefore, having no good cause to show for the purchase, he had made it secretly; the sum of sixty pounds, for an animal that he had consistently crabbed, amounting in the eyes of the world in general to a rather advanced love-token, if not a formal declaration. He had planned no future for the gray mare, but he had cherished a trembling hope that some day he might be in a position to restore her to her late owner without considering the expression in any eyes save those which, a couple of hours ago, had recalled to him the play of lights in a Connemara trout stream.

Now, it appeared, this pleasing vision must go the way of many others.

The August sunlight illumined Mr. Gunning's folly, and his bulging portmanteau, packed as brutally as any man in a fit of passion can pack; when he reached the hall, it also with

equal inappropriateness irradiated the short figure and seedy tidiness of the dealer who had been his confederate in the purchase of the mare.

"What did the vet say, Brennan?" said Mr. Gunning, with the brevity of ill humor.

Mr. Brennan paused before replying; a pause laden with the promise of evil tidings. His short silvery hair glistened respectably in the sunshine; he had preserved unblemished from some earlier phase of his career the air of a family coachman out of place. It veiled, though it could not conceal, the dissolute twinkle in his eye as he replied:

"He said, sir, if it wasn't that she was something out of condition, he'd recommend you to send her out to the lions at the Zoo!"

The specimen of veterinary humor had hardly the success that had been hoped for it. Rupert Gunning's face was so remarkably void of appreciation that Mr. Brennan abruptly relapsed into gloom.

"He said he'd only be wasting his time with her, sir; he might as well go stitch a bog-hole as them wounds the window gave her; the tendon of the near fore is the same as in two halves with it, let alone the shoulder, that's worse again with her pitching out on the point of it."

"Was that all he had to say?" demanded the mare's owner.

"Well, beyond those remarks he passed about the Zoo, I should say it was, sir," admitted Mr. Brennan.

There was another pause, during which Rupert asked himself what the devil he was to do with the mare, and Mr. Brennan, thoroughly aware that he was doing so, decorously thumbed the brim of his hat.

"Maybe we might let her get the night, sir," he said, after a respectful interval, "and you might see her yourself in the morning——"

"I don't want to see her. I know well enough what she looks like," interrupted his client irritably. "Anyhow, I'm crossing to England to-night, and I don't choose to miss the boat for the fun of looking at an unfortunate brute that's cut half to pieces!"

Mr. Brennan cleared his throat. "If you were thinking to leave her in my stables, sir," he said firmly, "I'd sooner be quit of her. I've only a small place, and I'd lose too much

time with her if I had to keep her the way she is. She might be on my hands three months and die at the end of it."

The clock here struck the quarter, at which Mr. Gunning ought to start for his train at Westland Row.

"You see, sir—" recommenced Brennan. It was precisely at his point that Mr. Gunning lost his temper.

"I suppose you can find time to shoot her," he said, with a very red face. "Kindly do so to-night!"

Mr. Brennan's arid countenance revealed no emotion. He was accustomed to understanding his clients a trifle better than they understood themselves, and inscrutable though Mr. Gunning's original motive in buying the mare had been, he had during this interview yielded to treatment and followed a prepared path.

That night, in the domestic circle, the dealer went so far as to lay the matter before Mrs. Brennan.

"He picked out a mare that was as poor as a raven—though she's a good enough stamp if she was in good condition—and tells me to buy her. "What price will I give, sir?" say I. "Ye'll give what they're askin'," says he, "and that's sixty sovereigns!" I'm thirty years buying horses, and such a disgrace was never put on me, to be made a fool of before all Dublin! Going giving the first price for a mare that wasn't value for the half of it! Well; he sees the mare then, cut into garters below in Nassau street. Devil a hair he cares! Nor never came down to the stable to put an eye on her! "Shoot her!" says he, leppin' up on a car. "Westland Row!" says he to the fella." Drive like blazes!" and away with him! Well, no matter; I earned my money easy, an' I got the mare cheap!"

Mrs. Brennan added another spoonful of brown sugar to the porter that she was mulling in a saucepan on the range.

"Didn't ye say it was a young lady that owned the mare, James?" she asked in a colorless voice.

"Well, you're the divil, Mary!" replied Mr. Brennan in sincere admiration.

The mail-boat was as crowded as is usual on the last night of the Horse Show week—overhead flowed the smoke from the funnels, behind flowed the foam river of wake; the Hill of Howth receded apace into the west, and its lighthouse glowed like a planet in the twilight. Men with cigars aggressively fit and dinner-ful, strode the deck in couples, and threshed

out the Horse Show and Leopardstown to their uttermost husks.

Rupert Gunning was also, but with excessive reluctance, discussing the Horse Show. As he had given himself a good deal of trouble in order to cross on this particular evening, and as anyone who was even slightly acquainted with Miss Fitzroy must have been aware that she would decline to talk of anything else, sympathy for him is not altogether deserved. The boat swung softly in a trance of speed, and Miss Fitzroy, better known to a large circle of intimates as Fanny Fitz, tried to think the motion was pleasant. She had made a good many migrations to England, by various routes and classes. There had, indeed, been times of stress when she had crossed unostentatiously third-class, trusting that luck and a thick veil might save her from her friends, but the day after she had sold a horse for sixty pounds was not the day for a daughter of Ireland to study economics. The breeze brought warm and subtle wafts from the machinery; it also blew wisps of hair into Fanny Fitz's eyes and over her nose, in a manner much revered in fiction, but in real life usually unbecoming and always exasperating. She leaned back on the bench and wondered whether the satisfaction of crowing over Mr. Gunning compensated her for abandoning the tranquil security of the Ladies' Cabin.

Mr. Gunning, though less contradictory than his wont, was certainly one of the most deliberately unsympathetic men she knew. None the less he was a man, and someone to talk to, both points in his favor, and she stayed on.

"I just missed meeting the man who bought my mare," she said, recurring to the subject for the fourth time; "apparently *he* didn't think her 'a leggy, long-backed brute,' as other people did, or said they did!"

"Did many people say it?" asked Mr. Gunning, beginning to make a cigarette.

"Oh, no one whose opinion signified!" retorted Fanny Fitz, with a glance from her charming, changeful eyes that suggested that she did not always mean quite what she said. "I believe the dealer bought her for a Leicestershire man. What she really wants is a big country where she can extend herself."

Mr. Gunning reflected that by this time the grey mare had extended herself once for all in Brennan's back yard; he had done nothing to be ashamed of, but he felt abjectly guilty.

"If I go with Maudie to Connemara again next year," continued Fanny, "I must look out for another. You'll come, too, I hope? A little opposition is such a help in making up one's mind! I don't know what I should have done without you at Leenane last June!"

Perhaps it was the vision of early summer that the words called up; perhaps it was the smile, half-seen in the semi-dark that curved her provoking lips; perhaps it was compunction for his share in the tragedy of the Connemara mare; but possibly without any of these explanations Rupert would have done as he did, which was to place his hand on Fanny Fitz's as it lay on the bench beside him.

She was so amazed that for a moment she wildly thought he had mistaken it in the darkness for his tobacco pouch. Then, jumping, with a shock, to the conclusion that even the unsympathetic Mr. Gunning shared most men's views about not wasting an opportunity, she removed her hand with a jerk.

"Oh! I beg pardon!" said Rupert pusillanimously. Miss Fitzroy fell back again to the tobacco-pouch theory.

At this moment the glowing end of a cigar deviated from its orbit on the deck and approached them.

"Is that you, Gunning? I thought it was your voice," said the owner of the cigar.

"Yes, it is," said Mr. Gunning, in a tone singularly lacking in encouragement. "Thought I saw you at dinner, but couldn't be sure."

As a matter of fact, no one could have been more thoroughly aware than he of Captain Carteret's presence in the saloon.

"I thought so too!" said Fanny Fitz, from the darkness, "but Captain Carteret wouldn't look my way!"

Captain Carteret gave a somewhat exaggerated start of discovery, and threw his cigar over the side. He had evidently come to stay.

"How was it I didn't see you at the Horse Show?" he said.

"The only people one ever sees there are the people one doesn't want to see," said Fanny. I could meet no one except the auctioneer from Craffroe, and he always did the same thing. "Fearful sultry day, Miss Fitzroy! Have ye a purchaser yet for your animal, Miss Fitzroy? Ye have not! Oh, fie, fie!" It was rather funny at first, but it palled."

"I was only there one day," said Captain Carteret; "I wish I'd known you had a horse up, I might have helped you to sell.

"Thanks! I sold all right," said Fanny Fitz magnificently. "Did rather well, too!"

"Capital!" said Captain Carteret vaguely. His acquaintance with Fanny extended over a three-day shooting party in Kildare, and a dance given by the detachment of his regiment at Enniscar, for which he had come down from the depot. It was not sufficient to enlighten him as to what it meant to her to own and sell a horse for the first time in her life.

"By the by, Gunning," he went on, "you seemed to be having a lively time in Nassau street yesterday! My wife and I were driving in from the polo, and we saw you in the thick of what looked like a street row. Someone in the club afterwards told me it was a horse you had only just bought at the show that had come to grief. I hope it wasn't much hurt?"

There was a moment of silence—astonished, inquisitive silence on the part of Miss Fitzroy; temporary cessation of the faculty of speech on that of Mr. Gunning. It was the moment, as he reflected afterwards, for a clean, decisive lie, a denial of all ownership; either that, or the instant flinging of Captain Carteret overboard.

Unfortunately for him, he did neither; he lied partially, timorously, and with that clinging to the skirts of the truth that marks the novice.

"Oh, she was all right," he said, his face purpling heavily in the kindly darkness. "What was the polo like, Carteret?"

"But I had no idea that you had bought a horse!" broke in Fanny Fitz, in high excitement. "Why didn't you tell Maudie and me? What is it like?"

"Oh, it's just a cob—a gray cob—I just picked her up at the end of the show."

"What sort of a cob? Can she jump? Are you going to ride her with Freddy's hounds?" continued the implacably interested Fanny.

"I bought her as—as a trapper, and to do a bit of carting," replied Rupert, beginning suddenly to feel his powers of invention awakening; "she's quite a common brute. She doesn't jump."

"She seemed to have jumped pretty well in Nassau street," remarked Captain Carteret; "as well as I could see in the crowd, she didn't strike me as if she'd take kindly to carting."

"Well, I do think you might have told us about it!" reiterated Fanny Fitz. "Men are so ridiculously mysterious

about buying or selling horses. I simply named my price and got it. I see nothing to make a mystery about in a deal; do you, Captain Cartaret?"

"Well, that depends on whether you are buying or selling," replied Captain Carteret.

But Fate, in the shape of a turning tide and a consequent roll, played for once into the hands of Rupert Gunning. The boat swayed slowly, but deeply, and a waft of steam blew across Miss Fitzroy's face. It was not mere steam; it had been among hot oily things, stealing and giving odor. Fanny Fitz was not ill, but she knew that she had her limits, and that conversation, save of the usual rudimentary kind with the stewardess, were best abandoned.

Miss Fitzroy's movements during the next two and a half months need not be particularly recorded. They included—

1. A week in London, during which the sixty pounds, or a great part of it, acquired by the sale of the Connemara mare, passed imperceptibly into items none of which, on a strict survey of expenditure, appeared to exceed three shillings and ninepence.

2. A month at Southsea, with Rupert Gunning's sister, Maudie Spicer, where she again encountered Captain Carteret, and entered aimlessly upon a semi-platonic and wholly unprofitable flirtation with him. During this epoch she wore out the remnant of her summer clothes and laid in substitutes; rather encouraged than otherwise by the fact that she had long since lost touch with the amount of her balance at the bank.

3. An expiatory and age-long sojourn of three weeks with relations at an Essex vicarage, mitigated only by persistent bicycling with her uncle's curate. The result, as might have been predicted by any one acquainted with Miss Fitzroy, was that the curate's affections were diverted from the bourne long appointed for them—namely, the eldest daughter of the house—and that Fanny departed in blackest disgrace, with the single consolation of knowing that she would never be asked to the vicarage again.

Finally she returned, third-class, to her home in Ireland, with nothing to show for the expedition except a new and very smart habit, and a vague assurance that Captain Carteret would give her a mount now and then with Freddy Alex-

ander's hounds. Captain Carteret was to be on detachment at Enniscar.

Mr. William Fennessy, lately returned from America, at present publican in Enniscar and proprietor of a small farm on its outskirts, had taken a gray mare to the forge.

It was now November, and the mare had been out at grass for nearly three months, somewhat to the detriment of her figure, but very much to her general advantage. Even in the Southwest of Ireland it is not usual to keep horses out quite so late in the year, but Mr. Fennessy, having begun his varied career as a traveling tinker, was not the man to be bound by convention. He had provided the mare with the society of a donkey and two sheep, and with the shelter of a filthy and ruinous cowshed. Taking into consideration the fact that he had only paid seven pounds ten shillings for her, he thought this accommodation was as much as she was entitled to.

She was now drooping and dozing in a dark corner of the forge, waiting to be shod—while the broken spring of a car was being patched—as shaggy and as dirty a creature as had ever stood there.

"Where did ye get that one?" inquired the owner of the car of Mr. Fennessy, in the course of much lengthy conversation.

"I got her from a cousin of my own that died down in the county Limerick," said Mr. Fennessy in his most agreeable manner. 'Twas himself bred her, and she was near destroyed fallin' back on a harra' with him. It's for postin' I have her."

"She's shlack enough yet," said the carman.

"Ah, wait awhile!" said Mr. Fennessy easily; "in a week's time, when I'll have her clipped out, she'll be as clean as amber."

The conversation flowed on to other themes.

It was nearly dark when the carman took his departure, and the smith, a silent youth with sore eyes, caught hold of one of the gray mare's fetlocks and told her to "lift!" He examined each hoof in succession by the light of a candle stuck in a bottle, raked his fire together, and then, turning to Mr. Fennessy, remarked:

"Ye'd laugh if ye were here the day I put a slipper on this

one, an' she afther comin' out o' the thrain—last June it was. 'Twas one Connolly back from Craffroe side was taking her from the station; him that thrained her for Miss Fitzroy. She gave him the two heels in the face." The glow from the fire illumined the smith's sardonic grin of remembrance. "She had a sandcrack in the near fore that time, and there's the sign of it yet."

The Cinderella-like episode of the slipper had naturally not entered into Mr. Fennessy's calculations, but he took the unforeseen without a change of countenance.

"Well, now," he said deliberately, "I was sayin' to meself on the road a while ago, if there was one this side o' the counthry would know her it'd be yerself."

The smith took the compliment with a blink of his sore eyes.

"Anyone'd be hard set to know her now," he said.

There was a pause, during which a leap of sparks answered each thump of the hammer on the white-hot iron, and Mr. Fennessy arranged his course of action.

"Well, Larry," he said, "I'll tell ye now what no one in this counthry knows but meself and Patsey Crimmeen. Sure I know it's as good to tell a thing to the ground as to tell it to yerself!"

He lowered his voice.

"'Twas Mr. Gunning of Streamstown bought that one from Miss Fitzroy at the Dublin Show, and a hundhred pound he gave for her!"

The smith mentally docked this sum by seventy pounds, but said, "By dam!" in polite convention.

"'T wasn't a week afther that I got her for twinty-five pound!"

The smith made a further mental deduction equally justified by the facts; the long snore and wheeze of the bellows filled the silence, and the dirty walls flushed and glowed with the steady crescendo and diminuendo of the glow.

The ex-tinker picked up the bottle with the candle. "Look at that!" he said, lowering the light and displaying a long transverse scar beginning at the mare's knee and ending in an enlarged fetlock.

"I seen that," said the smith.

"And look at that!" continued Mr. Fennessy, putting back the shaggy hair on her shoulder. A wide and shiny patch of

black skin showed where the hatter's plate glass had flayed the shoulder. "She played the divil goin' through the streets, and made flithers of herself this way, in a shop window. Gunning gave the word to shoot her. The dealer's boy told Patsey Crimmeen. 'Twas Patsey was caring her at the show for Miss Fitzroy. Shtan', will ye!"—this to the mare, whose eyes glinted white as she flung away her head from the light of the candle.

"Whatever fright she got she didn't forget it," said the smith.

"I was up in Dublin meself the same time," pursued Mr. Fennessy. "Aftther I seen Patsey I took a shtroll down to Brennan's yard. The leg was in two halves, barrin' the shkin, and the showlder swoll up as big as a sack o' male. I was three or four days goin' down to look at her this way, and I seen she wasn't as bad as what they thought. I come in one morning, and the boy says to me, "The boss has three horses comin' in to-day, an' I dunno where'll we put this one." I goes to Brennan, and he sitting down to his breakfast, and the wife with him. "Sir," says I, "for the honor of God sell me that mare!" We had hard strugglin' then. In the latther end the wife says, "It's as good for ye to part with her, James," says she, "and Mr. Gunning 'll never know what way she went. This honest man 'll never say where he got her." "I will not, ma'am," says I. "I have a brother in the postin' line in Belfast, and it's for him I'm buyin' her."

The process of making nail-holes in the shoe seemed to engross the taciturn young smith's attention for the next minute or two.

"There was a man over from Craffroe in town yesterday," he observed presently, "that said Mr. Gunning was lookin' out for a cob, and he'd fancy one that would lep."

He eyed his work sedulously as he spoke.

Something, it might have been the light of the candle, woke a flicker in Mr. Fennessy's eye. He passed his hand gently down the mare's quarter.

"Supposing now that the mane was off her, and something about six inches of a dock took off her tail, what sort of a cob d'ye think she'd make, Larry?"

The smith, with a sudden falsetto cackle of laughter, plunged the shoe into a tub of water, in which it gurgled and spluttered as if in appreciation of the jest.

Dotted at intervals throughout society are the people endowed with the faculty for "getting up things." They are dauntless people, filled with the power of driving lesser and deeper reluctant spirits before them; remorseless to the timid, carneying to the stubborn.

Of such was Mrs. Carteret, with powers matured in hill-stations in India, mellowed by much voyaging in P. and O. steamers. Not even an environment as unpromising as that of Enniscar in its winter torpor had power to dismay her. A public whose artistic tastes had hitherto been nourished upon traveling circuses, Nationalist meetings, and missionary magic lanterns in the Wesleyan schoolhouse, was, she argued, practically virgin soil, and would ecstatically respond to any form of cultivation.

"I know there's not much talent to be had," she said combatively to her husband, "but we'll just black our faces, and call ourselves the Green Coons or something, and it will be all right!"

"Dashed if I'll black my face again," said Captain Carteret; "I call it rot trying to get up anything here. There's no one to do anything."

"Well, there's ourselves and little Taylour" ("little Taylour," it may be explained, was Captain Carteret's subaltern), "that's two banjoes and a bones anyhow; and Freddy Alexander; and there's your dear friend Fanny Fitz—she'll be home in a few days, and those two big Hamilton girls——"

"Oh, Lord!" ejaculated Captain Carteret.

"Oh, yes!" continued Mrs. Carteret, unheedingly, "and there's Mr. Gunning; he'll come if Fanny Fitz does."

"He'll not be much advantage when he does come," said Captain Carteret spitefully.

"Oh, he sings," said Mrs. Carteret, arranging her neat small fringe at the glass—"rather a good voice. You needn't be afraid, my dear, I'll arrange that the fascinating Fanny shall sit next you!"

Upon this somewhat unstable basis the formation of the troupe of Green Coons was undertaken. Mrs. Carteret took off her coat to the work, or rather, to be accurate, she put on a fur-lined one, and attended a Nationalist meeting in the Town Hall to judge for herself how the voices carried. She returned rejoicing—she had sat at the back of the hall, and had not lost a syllable of the oratory, even during sundry

heated episodes, discreetly summarized by the local paper as "interruptions." The Town Hall was chartered, superficially cleansed, and in the space of a week the posters had gone forth.

By what means it was accomplished that Rupert Gunning should attend the first rehearsal he did not exactly understand. He found himself enmeshed in a promise to meet everyone else at the Town Hall, with tea at the Carterets' afterwards. Up to this point the fact that he was to appear before the public with a blackened face had been diplomatically withheld from him, and an equal diplomacy was shown on his arrival in the deputing of Miss Fitzroy to break the news to him.

"Mrs. Carteret says it's really awfully becoming," said Fanny, breathless and brilliant from assiduous practice of a hornpipe under Captain Carteret's tuition, "and as for trouble! We might as well make a virtue of necessity in this incredibly dirty place; my hands are black already, and I've only swept the stage!"

She was standing at the edge of the platform that was to serve as the stage, looking down at him, and it may be taken as a sufficient guide to his mental condition that his abhorrence of the prospect for himself was swallowed up by fury at the thought of it for her.

"Are you—do you mean to tell me you are going to dance *with a black face*" he demanded in bitter and incongruous wrath.

"No, I'm going to dance with Captain Carteret!" replied Fanny frivolously, "and so can you if you like!"

She was maddeningly pretty as she smiled down at him, with her bright hair roughened, and the afterglow of the dance alight in her eyes and cheeks. Nevertheless, for one whirling moment, the old Adam, an Adam blissfully unaware of the existence of Eve, asserted himself in Rupert. He picked up his cap and stick without a word, and turned toward the door. There, however, he was confronted by Mrs. Carteret, tugging at a line of chairs attached to a plank, like a very small bird with a very large twig. To refuse the aid that she immediately demanded was impossible, and even before the future back row of the sixpennies had been towed to its moorings, he realized that hateful as it would be to stay and join in these

distastful revels, it would be better than going home and thinking about them.

From this the intelligent observer may gather that absence had had its traditional, but by no means invariable, effect upon the heart of Mr. Gunning, and, had any further stimulant been needed, it had been supplied in the last few minutes by the aggressive and possessive manner of Captain Carteret.

The rehearsal progressed after the manner of amateur rehearsals. The troupe, with the exception of Mr. Gunning, who remained wrapped in silence, talked irrepressibly, and quite inappropriately to their rôle as Green Coons. Freddy Alexander and Mr. Taylour bear-fought untiringly for possession of the bones and the position of Corner Man; Mrs. Carteret alone had a copy of the music that was to be practised, and in consequence, the company hung heavily over her at the piano in a deafening and discordant swarm. The two tall Hamiltons, hitherto speechless by nature and by practice, became suddenly exhilarated at finding themselves in the inner circle of the soldiery, and bubbled with impotent suggestions and feverential laughter at the witticisms of Mr. Taylour. Fanny Fitz and Captain Carteret finally removed themselves to a grimy corner behind the proscenium, and there practised, sotto voice, the song with banjo accompaniment that was to culminate in the hornpipe. Freddy Alexander had gone forth to purchase a pack of cards, in the futile hope that he could prevail upon Mrs. Carteret to allow him to inflict conjuring tricks upon the audience.

"As if there was anything on earth that bored people as much as card tricks!" said that experienced lady to Rupert Gunning. "Look here, *would* you mind reading over these riddles, to see which you like to have to answer. Now here's a local one. I'll ask it—'Why am dis room like de Enniscar Demesne?'—and then *you'll* say, 'Because dere am so many pretty little deers in it!'"

"Oh, I couldn't possibly do that!" said Rupert hastily, alarmed as well as indignant; "I'm afraid I really must go now——"

He had to pass by Fanny Fitz on his way out of the hall. There was something vexed and forlorn about him, and, being sympathetic, she perceived it, though not its cause.

"You're deserting us!" she said, looking up at him.

"I have an appointment," he said stiffly, his glance evading

hers, and resting on Captain Carteret's well-clipped little black head.

Some of Fanny's worst scrapes had been brought about by her incapacity to allow any one to part from her on bad terms, and, moreover, she liked Rupert Gunning. She cast about in her mind for something conciliatory to say to him.

"When are you going to show me the cob that you bought at the Horse Show?"

The olive branch thus confidently tendered had a somewhat withering reception.

"The cob I bought at the Horse Show?" Mr. Gunning repeated with an increase of frigidity. "Oh, yes—I got rid of it."

He paused; the twangling of Captain Carteret's banjo bridged the interval imperturbably.

"Why had you to get rid of it?" asked Fanny, still sympathetic.

"She was a failure!" said Rupert vindictively; "I made a fool of myself in buying her!"

Fanny looked at him sideways from under her lashes.

"And I had counted on your giving me a mount on her now and then!"

Rupert forgot his wrath, forgot even the twangling banjo.

"I've just got another cob," he said quickly, "she jumps very well, and if you'd like to hunt her next Tuesday——"

"Oh, thanks awfully, but Captain Carteret has promised me a mount for next Tuesday!" said the perfidious Fanny.

Mrs. Carteret, on her knees by a refractory footlight, watched with anxiety Mr. Gunning's abrupt departure from the room.

"Fanny!" she said severely, "what have you been doing to that man?"

"Oh, nothing," said Fanny.

"If you've put him off singing I'll never forgive you!" continued Mrs. Carteret, advancing on her knees to the next footlight.

"I tell you I've done nothing to him," said Fanny Fitz, guiltily.

"Give me the hammer!" said Mrs. Carteret. "Have I eyes, or have I not?"

"He's awfully keen about her!" Mrs. Carteret said that

evening to her husband. "Bad temper is one of the worst signs. Men in love are always cross."

"Oh, he's a rotter!" said Captain Carteret conclusively.

In the meantime the object of this condemnation was driving his ten Irish miles home, by the light of a frosty full moon. Between the shafts of his cart a trim-looking mare of about fifteen hands trotted lazily, forging, shying, and generally comporting herself in the only way possible to a grass-fed animal who had been in the hands of such as Mr. William Fennessy. The thick and dingy mane that had hung impartially on each side of her neck, now, together with the major portion of her voluminous tail, adorned the manure heap in the rear of the Fennessy public house. The pallid fleece in which she had been muffled had given place to a polished coat of iron-gray, that looked black in the moonlight. A week of over-abundant oats had made her opinionated, but had not, so far, restored to her the fine-lady nervousness that had landed her in the window of the hat shop.

Rupert laid the whip along her fat sides with bitter disfavor. She was a brute in harness, he said to himself, her blemished fetlock was uglier than he had at first thought, and even though she had yesterday schooled over two miles of country like an old stager, she was too small to carry him, and she was not, apparently, wanted to carry anyone else. Here the purchase received a very disagreeable cut on the neck that interrupted her speculations as to the nature of the shadows of telegraph posts. To have bought two useless horses in four months was pretty average bad luck. It was also pretty bad luck to have been born a fool. Reflection here became merged in the shapeless and futile fumings of a man badly in love and preposterously jealous.

Known only to the elect among Entertainment Promoters are the methods employed by Mrs. Carteret to float the company of The Green Coons. The fact remains that on the appointed night the chosen troupe, approximately word-perfect, and with spirits somewhat chastened by stage fright, were assembled in the clerk's room of the Enniscar Town Hall, round a large basin filled horribly with a compound of burnt cork and water.

"It's not as bad as it looks!" said Mrs. Carteret, plunging in her hands and heroically smearing her face with a mass of

black, oozy matter believed to be a sponge. "It's quite becoming if you do it thoroughly. Mind, all of you, get it well into your ears and the roots of your hair!"

The Hamiltons, giggling wildly, submitted themselves to the ministrations of Freddy Alexander, and Mrs. Carteret, appallingly transformed into a little West Indian coolie woman, applied the sponge to the shrinking Fanny Fitz.

"Will you do Mr. Gunning, Fanny?" she whispered into one of the ears that she had conscientiously blackened. "I think he'd bear it better from you!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" replied Fanny, with a dignity somewhat impaired by her ebon countenance and monstrous green turban.

"Why not?"

Mrs. Carteret's small neat features seemed unnaturally sharpened, and her eyes and teeth glittered in her excitement.

"For goodness sake, take your awful little black face away, Mabel!" exclaimed Fanny hysterically, "It quite frightens me! I'm *very* angry with Mr. Gunning! I'll tell you why some other time."

"Well, don't forget you've got to say, 'Buck up, Sambo!' to him after he's sung his song, and you may fight with him as much as you like afterwards," said Mrs. Carteret, hurrying off to paint glaring vermilion mouths upon the loudly protesting Hamiltons.

During these vicissitudes, Rupert Gunning, arrayed in a green swallow-tailed calico coat, short white cotton trousers, and a skimpy nigger wig, presented a pitiful example of the humiliations which the allied forces of love and jealousy can bring upon the just. Fanny Fitz has since admitted that, in spite of the wrath that burned within her, the sight of Mr. Gunning morosely dabbing his long nose with the repulsive sponge that was shared by the troupe, almost moved her to compassion.

A pleasing impatience was already betraying itself in cat-calls and stampings from the sixpenny places, and Mrs. Carteret, flitting like a sheep dog round her flock, arranged them in couples and drove them before her on to the stage, singing in chorus, with a fair assumption of hilarity, "As we go marching through Georgia."

For Fanny Fitz the subsequent proceedings became merged in a nightmare of blinding heat and glare, made actual only by poignant anxieties as to the length of her green skirt. The hope

that she might be unrecognizable was shattered by the yell of "More power, Miss Fanny!" that crested the thunderous encore, evoked by her hornpipe with Captain Carteret; and the question of the skirt was decided by the fact that her aunts, in the front row, firmly perused their programmes from the beginning of her dance to its conclusion.

The entertainment went with varying success, after the manner of its kind. The local hits and personal allusions, toilfully compiled and ardently believed in, were received in damping silence, while Rupert Gunning's song, of the truculent order dedicated to basses, and sung by him with a face that would have done credit to Othello, received an ovation that confirmed Captain Carteret in his contempt for country audiences. The performance raged to its close in a "Cake Walk," to the inspiring strains of "Razors a-flying through the air," and the curtain fell on what the Enniscar *Independent* described cryptically as "*a tout ensemble à la conversazione* that was refreshingly unique."

"Five minutes more and I should have had heat appoplexy!" said Mrs. Carteret, hurling her turban across the clerk's room, "but it all went splendidly! Empty that basin out of the window, somebody and give me the vaseline. The last time I blacked my face it was covered with red spots for a week afterwards because I used soap instead of vaseline!"

Rupert Gunning approached Fanny with an open note in his hand.

"I've had this from your aunt," he said, handing it to her; it was decorated with sooty thumb marks, to which Fanny's black claw contributed a fresh batch as she took it, but she read it without a smile.

It was to the effect that the heat of the room had been too much for the elder Misses Fitzroy, and they had therefore gone home, but as Mr. Gunning had to pass their gate perhaps he would be kind enough to drive their niece home.

"Oh——" said Fanny, in tones from which dismay was by no means eliminated. "How stupid of Aunt Rachel!"

"I'm afraid there seems no way out of it for you," said Rupert offendedly.

A glimpse of their two wrathful black faces in the glass abruptly checked Fanny's desire to say something crushing. At this juncture she would rather have died than laughed.

Burnt cork is not lightly to be removed at the first essay,

and when, half an hour later, Fanny Fitz, with a pale and dirty face, stood under the dismal light of the lamp outside the Town Hall, waiting for Mr. Gunning's trap, she had the pleasure of hearing a woman among the loiterers say compassionately:

"God help her, the crayture! She looks like a servant that'd be bate out with work!"

Mr. Gunning's new cob stood hearkening with flickering ears to the various commotions of the street—she understood them all perfectly well, but her soul being uplifted by reason of oats, she chose to resent them as impertinences. Having tolerated with difficulty the instalment of Miss Fitzroy in the trap, she started with a flourish, and pulled hard until clear of the town and its flaring public houses. On the open road, with nothing more enlivening than the dark hills, half-seen in the light of the rising moon, she settled down. Rupert turned to his silent companion. He had become aware during the evening that something was wrong, and his own sense of injury was frightened into the background.

"What do you think of my new buy?" he said pacifically. "She's a good goer, isn't she?"

"Very," replied Fanny.

Silence again reigned. One or two further attempts at conversation met with equal discouragement. The miles passed by. At length as the mare slackened to walk up a long hill, Rupert said with a voice that had the shake of pent-up injury:

"I've been wondering what I've done to be put into Coventry like this!"

"I thought you probably wouldn't care to speak to me!" was Fanny's astonishing reply, delivered in tones of ice.

"I!" he stammered, 'not care to speak to *you*! You ought to know——"

"Yes, indeed, I do know!" broke in Fanny, passing from the frigid zone with characteristic speed, "I know what a *failure* your horse dealing at the Dublin Show was! I've heard how you bought my mare, and had her shot the same night, because you wouldn't take the trouble even to go and look at her after the poor little thing was hurt! Oh! I can't bear even to *think* of it!"

Rupert Gunning remained abjectly and dumfoundedly silent.

"And then," continued Fanny, whirling on the final point of her indictment, "you pretended to Captain Carteret and me that the horse you had bought was "a common brute," a *cob for carting*, and you said the other night that you had made a fool of yourself over it! I didn't know then all about it, but I do now. Captain Carteret heard about it from the dealer in Dublin. Even the dealer said it was a pity you hadn't given the mare a chance!"

"It's all perfectly true," said Rupert, in a low voice.

A soft answer, so far from turning away wrath, frequently inflames it.

"Then I think there's no more to be said!" said Fanny, hotly.

There was silence. They had reached the top of the hill, and the gray mare began to trot.

"Well, there's just one thing I should like to say," said Rupert awkwardly, his breath coming very short, "I couldn't help everything going wrong about the mare. It was just my bad luck. I only bought her to please you. They told me she couldn't get right after the accident. What was the good of my going to look at her? I wanted to cross in the boat with you. Whatever I did I did for you. I would do anything in the world for you——"

It was at this crucial moment that there arose suddenly from the dim gray road in front of them a slightly grayer shadow, a shadow that limped amid the clanking of chains. The Connemara mare, now masquerading as a County Cork cob, asked for nothing better. If it were a ghost, she was legitimately entitled to flee from it; if, as was indeed the case, it was a donkey, she made a point of shying at donkeys. She realized that, by a singular stroke of good fortune, the reins were lying in loops on her back.

A snort, a sideways bound, a couple of gleeful kicks on the dashboard, and she was away at full gallop, with one rein under her tail, and a pleasant open road before her.

"It's all right!" said Rupert, recovering his balance by a hairbreadth, and feeling in his heart that it was all wrong, "the Craffroe Hill will stop her. Hold on to the rail."

Fanny said nothing. It was, indeed, all that she could do to keep her seat in the trap, with which the rushing road was playing cup and ball; she was, besides, not one of the people who are conversational in emergencies. When an animal,

as active and artful as the Connemara mare, is going at some twenty miles an hour, with one of the reins under its tail, endeavors to detach the rein are not much avail, and when the tail is still tender from recent docking, they are a good deal worse than useless. Having twice nearly fallen on his head, Rupert abandoned the attempt and prayed for the long stiff ascent of the Craffroe Hill.

It came swiftly out of the gray moonlight. At its foot another road forked to the right; instead of facing the hill that led to home and stable, the mare swung into the side road, with one wheel up on the grass, and the cushions slipping from the seat, and Rupert, just saving the situation with the left rein that remained to him, said to himself that they were in for a bad business.

For a mile they swung and clattered along it, with the wind striking and splitting against their faces like a cold and tearing stream of water; a light wavered and disappeared across the pallid fields to the left, a group of starveling trees on a hill slid up into the skyline behind it, and at last it seemed as if some touch of self-control, some suggestion of having had enough of the joke, was shortening the mare's grasping stride. The trap pitched more than ever as she came up into the shafts and back into her harness; she twisted suddenly to the left into a narrow lane, cleared the corner by an impossible fluke, and Fanny Fitz was hurled ignominiously on to Rupert Gunning's lap. Long briars and twigs struck them from either side, the trap bumped in craggy ruts and slashed through wide puddles, then reeled irretrievably over a heap of stones and tilted against the low bank to the right.

Without any exact knowledge of how she got there, Fanny found herself on her hands and knees in a clump of bracken on top of the bank; Rupert was already picking himself out of rugs and other jetsam in the field below her, and the mare was proceeding up the lane at a disorderly trot, having jerked the trap on to its legs again from its reclining position.

Fanny was lifted down into the lane; she told him that she was not hurt, but her knees shook, her hands trembled, and the arm that was round her tightened its clasp in silence. When a man is strongly moved by tenderness and anxiety and relief, he can say little to make it known; he need not—it is known beyond all telling by the one other person whom it concerns. She felt suddenly that she was safe, that his heart was

torn for her sake, and that the tension of the last ten minutes had been great. It went through her with a pang, and her head swayed against his arm. In a moment she felt his lips on her hair, on her temple; and the oldest, the most familiar of all words of endearment, was spoken at her ear. She recovered herself, but in a new world. She tried to walk on up the lane, but stumbled in the deep ruts and found the supporting arm again ready at need. She did not resist it.

A shrill neigh arose in front of them. The mare had pulled up at a closed gate, and was apparently apostrophising some low farm buildings beyond it. A dog barked hysterically, the door of a cowshed burst open, and a man came out with a lantern.

"Oh, I know now where we are!" cried Fanny wildly; "it's Johnny Connolly's! Oh, Johnny, Johnny Connolly, we've been run away with!"

"For God's sake," responded Johnny Connolly, standing stock still in his amazement, "is that Miss Fanny?"

"Get hold of the mare," shouted Rupert, "or she'll jump the gate!"

Johnny Connolly advanced, still calling upon his God, and the mare uttered a low but vehement neigh.

"Ye're deshtroyed, Miss Fanny! And Mr. Gunning, the Lord save us! Ye're killed, the two o' ye! What happened ye at all? Woa gerri, woa gerrie! Ye'd say she knew me, the crayture."

The mare was rubbing her dripping face and neck against the farmer's shoulder, with hoarse whispering snorts of recognition and pleasure. He held his lantern high to look at her.

"Musha, why wouldn't she know me?" he roared. "Sure it's yer own mare, Miss Fanny! 'Tis the Connemara mare I thtrained for ye! And may the devil sweep and roast thim that has told through all the counthry that she was killed.





MRS. WILTON'S Expectations: The Story of a Legacy, by Jane Richardson. Illustrations by E. A. Furman*



MRS. WILTON sat in consultation with her three daughters the day after her husband's funeral. She had been a great belle in her girlhood—a large florid woman, with an abundance of blonde hair. The two elder girls, Cecilia and Edith, resembled her, both in appearance and in the indolent good nature which was their mother's chief characteristic. Susan, the younger, had been named by her father for his mother, and the name suited her. She reminded one of some plain, old-fashioned flower. She had been born with the instinct of helpfulness, and all her life had been ready to do the tasks which others shirked, or over which they rebelled and grumbled.

But she was no neglected Cinderella to be snubbed and set aside; on the contrary, they adored her and had firm faith, with good reason, in her practical sense and sound judgment. While her sisters were undeniably handsome, Susan was hopelessly commonplace; she was short and plump, with glossy, brown hair, honest brown eyes, and good teeth; cheerful and hopeful even under the most adverse circumstances.

Her husband's sudden death had been an overwhelming blow to Mrs. Wilton; he had been open-handed and hospitable to a fault, and had never anticipated a time when his family might be deprived of his support. He had been a successful lawyer, but spent generously the liberal fees that he earned, so that there remained nothing but the house in which they

*Written for Short Stories.

lived—fortunately unencumbered—and a modest life insurance.

Mrs. Wilton was as helpless as a baby, and the two elder daughters scarcely less dependent; there was nothing by which either of the two might have added to their insufficient income.

"I suppose you could take lessons," said their mother,



tearfully. In every crisis of life her mind reverted instantly to the idea of "taking lessons" in something or other, as a certain, if future, panacea, for existing ills.

That Cecilia and Edith lacked both faculty and perseverance was left out of her calculations, and the length of time required to attain anything approaching practical proficiency was also overlooked.

"Cecilia might take up her music again and fit herself for teaching," she said.

"There are already twenty-seven music teachers in Madison, mother," Susan interposed, not willing that they should deceive themselves or waste time in undertaking the impossible. "Miss Fry, Signor Rubini, Miss Francis—"

"Oh, for mercy's sake, we don't want the whole list," Cecilia exclaimed, impatiently.

"I think that Edith could do something with her elocution," the poor mother suggested after her first failure. "You know how the *Clarion* praised her when she read 'Curfew Shall not Ring To-night.' It said that if she devoted herself seriously to dramatic art there was a brilliant future before her."

"Oh, it says that of everybody—even of Essie Pringle, and you know what *she* is."

Mrs. Wilton began to sob.

"I never saw such a kill-joy as you are, Susan," she said at last, with her black-bordered handkerchief at her eyes.

Susan flushed a little; she sat on a low ottoman at her mother's side, fondling one of her fat, white hands, the pudgy fingers glittering with diamonds.

"No, dear," Susan said gently. "I'm not a kill-joy; I am only trying to keep you from wasting the little that we have in experiments that are not worth while."

"There's your uncle Jabez, he is certain to help us. He never forgets us at Christmas, nor on any of your birthdays. Though he hadn't seen your father since he went out to California, he was very fond of him when they were boys, and he always meant to visit us."

"No, he won't forget us," Cecilia echoed, hopefully.

"We can't depend upon that either," said the practical Susan, "he may 'remember' us, and he may not. We know how peculiar he is, and I don't think, in any event, that we can count upon a man, at his age, shouldering the responsibility of another man's family—though the other man was his own brother; especially as he never had made up his mind to have a family of his own."

"You disapprove *everything*," said Edith. "What do you advise—that we shall march in procession to the poorhouse, with Mamma at the head?"

"Not at all; I propose that we shall depend upon ourselves, and begin with something that offers at least a reasonable

chance of success. I've thought a great deal about it," she went on, "and I frankly admit that my plan has nothing novel to commend it; it isn't romantic, and we can't at all feel certain that we shall succeed; thousands *have* failed at it, but, on the other hand, a few have prospered.

"What is it?" demanded Cecilia. "Something we'll hate, I know. When people are poor they always have to do the things they hate; never the things they like."

"What I propose," said Susan, unhesitatingly, "is that we turn this house into—a boarding-house."

There was an exclamation of horror. They had always prided themselves—with all their old-fashioned hospitality—on their exclusiveness.

"Open the house to everybody and anybody—*never*," and they shook their heads vehemently.

"To anybody that is respectable—and can pay," Susan replied, unabashed.

In the end she had her way. By coaxing, by the exercise of tact enough to have carried a government through a delicate diplomatic controversy, she obtained her mother's consent; and, not only this, induced her self-indulgent sisters to establish themselves in very desirable quarters on the top floor, her mother only remaining undisturbed.

The house was soon filled with the usual flotsam and jetsam that drift through life, content with, or temporarily resigned to, their homelessness; the young rector of St. Jude's, Miss Vantage, the principal of the High School, a rich widow with her two daughters, several young business men, among whom was Richard Burrell, to whom Susan had been engaged for a year. All were tractable and reasonably well content, except old Mr. Worthington. Mrs. Wilton had been very dubious about him, but he had come to her well recommended although appearances were certainly against him. He was very shabby, often disagreeable and trying in many ways, and he beat her down to much less than what she assured him were "her regular rates."

There was but one room vacant when he came, a small stuffy chamber in the rear, but after much fault-finding he said that it would do. He was exacting about the cooking, and imperious in his demands for hot water, although Mrs. Wilton said plaintively that she could not understand why, since he, apparently used so little. But she grew accustomed

to him, as one gets used to a pinching shoe, and turned him over to Miss Vantage, who played chess with him occasionally. From her he learned of their "expectations," and that their relative in California had really sent them the money with which to undertake the boarding-house.

"More fool he," remarked the old man crossly, as he protested against an unforeseen checkmate. "They're a worthless pack."

"O, don't say that!" exclaimed the good-natured schoolteacher. "I'm sure Miss Susan is as good as gold."

"Well—*she's* all right, maybe," he admitted tentatively, making another unlucky move. It was true: Susan *was* as good as gold. The whole responsibility of the establishment had fallen upon her willing shoulders; she did the marketing, paid the bills, regularly and promptly, and conciliated the dissatisfied, and had worried through the first year with unimpaired temper and credit.

Uncle Jabez had given them a helping hand, as Miss Vantage had said, but he had not over-exerted himself in this direction. However, what he had done gave Mrs. Wilton grounds of hope for better things to come, and she dilated eloquently on his wealth and generosity. Whenever the outlook was especially discouraging, she confidently declared that "he would not let them suffer."



They had held their own and no more. Susan had not expected to grow rich, and was grateful that they had not fallen into debt. But the house had suffered: the furniture began to show signs of hard usage; the carpets were growing threadbare, and the profits of the business would certainly



not enable her to replace them when they were quite gone.

And she had other troubles. She had insisted upon releasing Burrell from his engagement, arguing that his salary was not more than sufficient for two. She would not consent that he should be burdened with the support of her mother and sisters, as hundreds of other women had done before her.

Burrell, who was superintendent of the electric lightworks, had to admit that she was right, and, while he released her, he did so with the clear understanding that he considered himself still irrevocably bound, and should continue to do so as long as she lived, or until she married some other man.

And, moreover, he came to board with them, and found consolation in seeing her constantly, and helping and comforting her in a thousand ways.

He was especially fortunate in being able to mollify old Mr. Worthington, listening patiently to his complaints and his interminable stories, and he even relieved Miss Vantage at chess, permitting himself to be beaten with the utmost amiability. But his indulgence drew the line at the old man's criticism of the house and its management. Not only did he stop him, but he intimated pretty plainly that he was ungrateful. "I reckon I am," he replied, gruffly, "but I haven't any patience with their fool talk about their rich kin; I don't believe they have any."

This, however, was to be at last proved beyond cavil. Mrs. Wilton received a letter from Jabez Wilton's agent in San Francisco—he never wrote, himself; he always telegraphed. The letter stated that Mr. Jabez Wilton would start east that morning, and be with them five day's later. Mighty preparations began at once. They had never seen him, as has been explained—not even a picture of him, for he was one of those few people who do exist who refuse to be photographed.

They talked eloquently—all but Susan, who maintained her ordinary composure—of his yacht, his ranches, and his fine house on Knob Hill, and Mrs. Wilton hinted that he might take Cecilia or Edith back to California with him. Susan, in this event, would remain behind, of course, and marry Burrell.

Mrs. Wilton insisted upon giving up her own room to Uncle Jabez, and went to the expense of buying a new carpet and new curtains; she also brought out the few remaining relics of their former prosperity—pictures and bric-à-brac and embroidered cushions.

"Even then," she remarked, "it will seem very poor and plain to a man who has lived in such luxury as he has enjoyed all these years."

Old Mr. Worthington was grumpier and more crabbed than ever through all these preparations. He said very disagree-

able things, insinuating that if Mr. Jabez Wilton were poor "they would never lift a finger for him."

"Oh, come, that isn't fair," said Burrell, to whom the old man thus freed his mind. "I don't think that Mrs. Wilton would be really unkind to anybody. She does her best, and you must remember that she isn't used to this sort of thing."

"Better women have been."

"That may be; but she has honestly tried her best; you haven't been ill-treated or neglected in any way, and, if you'll excuse me for saying so, I think they've been very patient indeed."

Mr. Worthington growled something indistinctly to the effect that "they'd been paid for it."

"Money don't pay for all you've had here—and I understand that Mrs. Wilton has made an exception in your favor that she really could not afford."

"Nobody forced her to do it; she don't *have* to keep me. I can go somewhere else."

"Not where you would find another Susan," Burrell retorted quickly.

The face of the crabbed old man softened. "No," he admitted, "that's so, for there isn't another Susan." Whereupon Burrell forgave him. The eventful day came, dull and threatening, with a biting east wind. A fire crackled in the grate, casting rosy shadows upon the wall and ceiling of the cheerful room, which was in readiness for its prospective occupant. At the last moment Susan had filled a bowl with splendid yellow chrysanthemums and placed it upon a table by the window.

Mrs. Wilton and her two elder daughters wore becoming new gowns, and there was much excitement amongst the boarders. Old Mr. Worthington was the only one who entirely ignored the impending arrival. At breakfast he had been very dissatisfied about his coffee; the toast was scorched, he said, and he sent it away, and he looked dubiously at the fresh-laid eggs, whose integrity he openly questioned.

"Leave him to me," Susan said, and she brought fresh coffee, made more toast, and so coaxed him into some semblance of tolerable behavior, but as he began so he continued.

Miss Vantage, at length, boldly remonstrated, setting down his cross-grained mood to the jealousy of querulous old age.

The train was due at four o'clock, and Burrell and Susan had gone to the station, hoping to recognize the expected arrival by some sort of intuition.

Mrs. Wilton ran up-stairs after they had gone, to see if any thing needful had been forgotten in the guest chamber.



On the threshold she detected an unmistakable odor of tobacco. She opened the door and stood transfixed.

There sat old Mr. Worthington in his shabby dressing gown, lounging in the armchair, smoking his pipe, his slippered feet on the fender.

Newspapers were scattered about, and he had been lying on the lounge, as the disordered pillows made evident.

"Well, *really*, Mr. Worthington!" said Mrs. Wilton, her eyes flashing—she knew him to be capable of anything—"I *must* say that *this* is unpardonable."

She was always ladylike.

He turned and glanced at her calmly over his shoulder, and did not stir.

"Sit down, Arabella," he said at length, "and don't excite yourself."

Arabella indeed! Addressing her by her Christian name! He had never been quite so impertinent as this.

She walked across the room and stood beside him, panting with indignation.

"I've a right here," he said with unusual mildness. "I'm the man you've fixed up this room for, and Susan will not find me at the station. I've been in your house some time, as you'll allow."

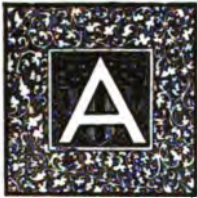
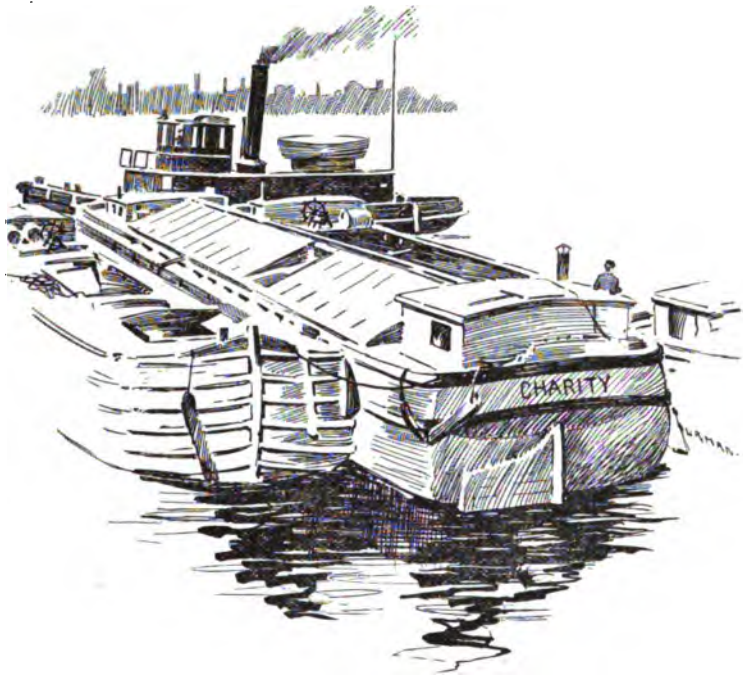
Mrs. Wilton did not in the least comprehend what he was saying; she was so dazed that she could not speak.

"This has been done before," he went on, "I've read about it. I wanted to make certain as to who and what you all were before entering into an arrangement that I might regret. Sit down, do." And thus urged she dropped limply into a chair beside him. The truth at last dawned upon her, but she could only look at him in silence.

"You've been really kind and patient—and I've tried you purposely. I like you, Arabella—and Susan. She may have this house, if you agree—it will be just the thing—and you and the other girls may go back to California with me, if you have no better plan."

Mrs. Wilton had no better plan; and it was so arranged.





**FLYER In Coal: The
Story of a Capable Woman,
by Arthur M. Chase. Illus-
trations by E. A. Furman***



THE door of my outer office opened sharply and a deep voice addressed the office boy.

"Stand over against the window, sonny, for I've brought contagion. Is the boss in? Yes? Then just wait till I give him a scare."

There was a heavy tread across the floor and a shrewd, ruddy face under a battered derby hat peered in at me. My visitor, with an elaborate air of caution, advanced slowly, disclosing underneath the ruddy face a weather-beaten

*Written for Short Stories.

overcoat buttoned up to the chin, and beneath that again a weather-beaten, skimpy skirt, worn however with the untrammelled grace of a pair of trousers.

"Come in, Mrs. McGonigle," I cried. "Glad to see you. How are you?"

"Up and doin'," she replied, extending a big, mittened hand. "I was just after warnin' your boy, for three-quarters of me family is down wid the whoopin'-cough. The balance, me old man, is in the hospital along wid Jerry McCafferty on account of an argument on the coal question. He's doin' nicely, thankye. Yes, McCafferty got all that was comin' to him; but the end of it was the two of them threw each other into the hold of the "Peaceful Stream," and there was some damage done in the shape of broken bones. Me old man broke an arm and a rib; Jerry, he broke an arm and two ribs. Yes, it's a bad thing to have the purvider of a poor family smashed that way. But," said Mrs. McGonigle, sitting down and liberating a sigh that fluttered the papers on my desk, "that ain't all."

"Dear me, Mrs. McGonigle," I said.

"Well," she replied, with a quizzical look, "perhaps it's dear me Mrs. McGonigle, and perhaps it isn't. That's what I've come to you to find out.

"Now you see, Mr. McNamara," she went on, in a confidential but hoarse murmur, "I knew nothin' about the scrap until a whole push came on board the 'Charity' hollerin' that me husband and McCafferty had got kilt in a fight. So I puts out right away for the "Peaceful Stream." My first idea was to mix it up wid Mrs. McCafferty, but she's such a very little woman, I gave it up. So instead I chased along after the ambulance to the hospital, and found out the whole of the damage that McGonigle had got.

"Well, when I got back to the boat me three childer was roarin' wid the whoopin'-cough. And wasn't that the divvle to pay? Ye see, the 'Charity' belongs to the Wyomin' Valley Railroad, and it doesn't do for their captains to be cuttin' up the way McGonigle had. If they heard of it there'd be the grand bounce, sure. And where would I go, turned out on the street wid three sick childer, and one dollar and three cents in me pocket? And what would McGonigle do, comin' out of the hospital and findin' his job floated

away from him? It's not easy for a canal-boat captain to find a berth, these days.

"'Now,' ses I to mesilf, 'Mary McGonigle, it's up to you. You've got to protect your childer, and you've got to hold on to your old man's job. How'll ye do it? Not by sittin' still, ye old stuff,' ses I. 'Ye've got enemies as well as friends on the canal-boats, and it's likely enough the enemies will be tellin' tales about you. What'll ye do?'

"What did I do? Well, Mr. McNamara, it was just the limit. I outs wid me scissors and cuts off me hair. There wasn't much of it, but I hated to lose it. And I sneaked ashore wid a pair of McGonigle's pants in a newspaper. In a tennymint house I made a change, and I went on up-town wid me petticoat in the newspaper. And me a decint, middle-aged woman.

"Where was I goin'? To the offices of the Wyomin' Valley Railroad. And who should I go to see? Sure, the main gazeyboo, the president himself. So I into the big offices and past all them little scribblin' clerks to a glass door marked President, and widout bein' asked, in I stepped.

"'Who let you in here?' says a sharp lookin' feller behind a desk. 'I can't see anyone, I'm very busy.'

"'I'm lookin' for Mr. Courtenay, President of the Wyomin' Valley Railroad. Are you him?' ses I.

"'Yes,' ses he, very snappy.

"'Well, Mr. Courtenay,' I ses, 'me name is McGonigle, Jack McGonigle, captain of yer canal-boat 'Charity.' I just thought I'd run up and see if there was anythin' ye wanted done. I'm a willin' man for work,' I ses.

"Well, he'd hardly looked at me.

"'See Mr. Wilson of the Lighterage Department,' he ses, scratchin' away wid a pen.

"I laid me hand on the door knob; but thinkin' that as long as I'd come I'd make all the impression I could, I asks very perlite:

"'Where is Mr. Wilson, sir?'

"I thought he'd fly over the top of the desk at me.

"'Go out into that office,' he bawls, 'and ask, ask, ask.'

"'Thankye sir,' ses I. And I'd opened the door when he gives a yelp:

"'Great heavens, who cut yer hair for ye?'

"I put up me hand like a shot, and there was a fistfull

of it that me scissors had skipped, hangin' over me coat collar. I gave it a quick twist, like a woman would, and felt for a hairpin. And then—ye could have knocked me over wid a poke of yer finger.

“‘What in thunder!’ ses the president, staring wid all his eyes.

“‘I got hold of meself.

“‘Me barber is an Eyetalian,’—I begins, but he begins to snicker. And the harder I looked at him the worse he snickered.

“‘Ye seem to see somethin’ funny,’ I ses. But he only kept on a snickerin’.

“‘Ye may be the president of a railroad,’ I ses, ‘and I don’t forget yer place or mine; but don’t be gigglin’ at me. I’m an honest and respectable man,’ I ses, ‘and I’d ask ye not to be snickerin’ at me, Mr. Courtenay. Cut it,’ I ses. ‘A workingman has feelin’s as well as ye, if he’s a man.’

“‘And wid that me petticoat fell out of the newspaper.

“‘I got out of that place somehow, and I stamped out to the elevator wid all the clerks starin’ at me. And never a word. A messenger come after me to say that the president wanted to see me back.

“‘‘Not a word,’ ses I. ‘Not a word.’

“‘And me just shakin’ wid rage and shame. But for the sake of the childer I got out of there in a hurry, and never a word. But oh, I’d have felt good to have punched the president one for findin’ me out.

“‘I was that tearin’ mad I went straight home in McGonigle’s pants. It was dark on the pier, by good luck, and none of my neighbors saw me. But when I stepped into me cabin, the childer nearly flew through the winder, and Yan—he’s the deckhand, and a Dutchman—sat down on the hot stove.

“‘‘Yan,’ I ses, ‘if ye ever breathe of this to any livin’ soul I’ll thump ye into a Frankfurter sausage.’

“‘He knew I’d have kept me word, and he’s not told.

“‘Well, I’d made a nice mess of that piece of business. If I’d let well enough alone it wasn’t likely the railroad would have heard of McGonigle’s misfortune, and anyway such a big gun as the president wouldn’t have. But after McGonigle’s lady come a-masquerading to his office, he’d make it his business to know what was to be known. And then out would come what I’d been tryin’ to cover up. And then,

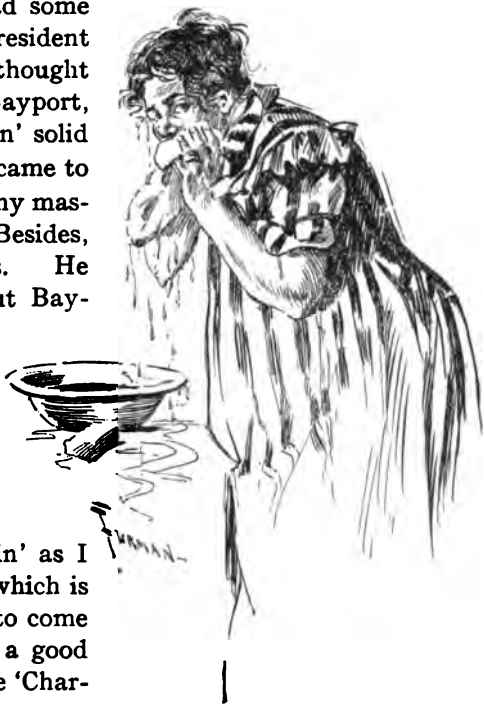
in would come a new captain for the 'Charity.' And out would go the McGonigle family. That was what I was up against. And how would I go up against it? was the trouble that was worryin' me.

" 'Twas the next day I read a piece in the paper about the coal famine in Bayport, a place a bit of the way up the Sound: how the schools was closed, and the churches runnin' wid one service a week, and the people put to it to keep warm wid gas and oil and wooden sidewalks.

" 'Now, here's the foolishness of the railroads,' ses I, 'holdin' boatloads and boatloads of coal down here in New York, when there's a place like Bayport where they want it bad, and would pay for it. Why, take this old 'Charity,'—she had two hundred tons of hard coal, egg size, in her—'up at Bayport she'd be worth four dollars a ton, safely, more than here.'

"And I figgered wid a pencil that would come to eight hundred dollars. I had some idea of goin' to the president and askin' him what he thought of sendin' a boat to Bayport, and by that way gettin' solid wid him. But when it came to facin' him again after my masquerade, I gave it up. Besides, it was all foolishness. He might know more about Bayport than me; and if he didn't, what was to keep him from takin' my idee and givin' me the bounce at the same time? So that settled that.

"But the next mornin' as I was washin' me face—which is a grand time for ideas to come to you—I was hit wid a good one. Why not take the 'Charity' up to Bayport on me own hook? Could I do it? Of course, for the 'Charity' ain't one of your common canal-boats that has to be hauled around by a tug or a mule; but she has a little engine that turns a little



splashin', thumpin' wheel under the stern, and pushes her along about as fast as a slow man can walk. And could I sell the coal? Well, if the paper told the truth the people of Bayport was ready to buy, and I'd be ready to sell. Only what would happen to me if I sold two hundred ton of coal that didn't belong to me? Well, I sat down, and I worked it out in this way. If I sold the coal I'd give the company a share of the profits and keep somethin' for meself, and perhaps they'd think me smart enough to hold onto. Or, if they put up a very strong kick, I'd give them all the profits. After that, they'd scarcely send a poor grass widder wid three sick childer to jail. And if they took all me profit and fired me out in the bargain, I'd be no worse off than I was likely to be. Oh, I seen that was an idee that might be worth tryin'. And I seen it was an idee that would have to be tried, after that gossipin' creature, Mrs. Mulligan, come aboard and told me how her old man had got it from the day watchman on the pier that there was goin' to be a new captain on the 'Charity.'

"'Oh, Mrs. McGonigle,' ses she, 'it's turrible hard on you. Ye'll have to live on charity till yer old man gets back.'

"'Don't yer believe it, Mrs. Mulligan,' ses I to her. "'I've lived on the 'Charity' a matter of three years, but I've lived five-and-thirty years and never a day of it on charity. And never a day of me life will I live on charity. So you kin put that in yer pipe and smoke it.

"'Well, the first thing to do was to get the 'Charity' out from between the other canal-boats and tied up near the end of the pier, so's I could sneak when I got ready. So I paid a visit to Mrs. Mayer, me next neighbor, and told her all about the turrible whoopin'-cough me childer had, and the contagion, and how I couldn't help fearing as her childer would catch it. Well, the upshot of that was the 'Charity' got a new berth out near the end of the pier, and Captain Mayer helped me a good deal in makin' the shift.

"The next thing was to sneak. I was sure of me boat, but I wasn't sure of Yan. I got him down in the cabin after the childer was asleep, and told him my idee. But he wouldn't have nothin' to do wid it.

"'We'd all git to yail'—which is what he calls jail—he kep sayin'.

"'All right, Yan,' I ses. 'I won't ask yer any more; I'll

do the whole job meself. Only, perhaps, when I be tryin' to run the engine and steer all to oncet the boiler will bust, and then Angeline and Alberta and little Agathar will all git drowned.'

"I knew that would hit him, because he was turrible soft on them kids.

"No, he wasn't goin' to let them git drowned. He'd git the police and stop me.

"'Ye'll git the police, Yan!' I ses to him. 'Ye won't git out of this cabin until I'm ready to go, and then I'll put ye ashore. I don't want ye on this boat against your will; but when ye step off, ye say good-bye forever to Angeline and Alberta and little Agathar.'

"Never argue wid a Dutchman. I didn't wid Yan, and after awhile he began to think wid his pig-headed mind and come over.

"Well, 'twas ten o'clock at night, everyone in the canal-boats was in bed, the tide was settin' in strong, so ses I, 'now or never.'

"Shall I tell you how I ran the boat that night? Upon me word I don't know. I may be a big, strong woman, and fit to take the measure of McGonigle, as some say, but me heart was in me mouth more than oncet that night. Every tug that came chasin' along behind me I was afraid was sent to fetch us back; and every time I see a rowboat pokin' out from a pier I thought 'twas the harbor police after me. It wasn't a rough night, but bitter cold; and if ever the lights in the city looked warm and cosy to me they did when I went up the East river that night.

"How we got through Hell Gate I don't know, whether 'twas by luck or miracle. The 'Charity' is an unhandy boat to handle in a current like that; and what wid me not knowin' the way too well, it's a mercy we didn't bring up against one of them rocks. But we got through. After that 'twas plain sailin' out on the Sound, big and lonely, and so cold it makes me teeth ache to talk about it. First me feet would ache until they got numb, and then me hands. I'd stamp and I'd slap meself and I'd jump up and down, but I couldn't keep warm a minnit. And the loneliness, Mr. McNamara, out there on that black water why it looked like the nearest living thing in sight was the stars over me head. And the bitterness

of the cold that would creep into the very marrow of yer bones and make ye ache to breathe it.

"There come a time I nearly give up. I got colder and colder, and wid the cold sleepier and sleepier. By and by I didn't feel the cold so much, and just fell to sleep all over. I punched meself and danced, but all the time I'd be carin' less about doin' it; and carin' less about savin' the boat, and about McGonigle and the childer, and just wantin' nothing but to go to sleep. I finally got hold of meself and flopped down into the engine room.

"'Yan,' I says, 'for the mercy of Heaven let the boat drift for awhile. I'm freezin' to death.'

"And I jest tumbled down on the floor. Well, Yan he shook me and walked me around; and by and by he made me a pot of strong, hot tea. He's a good soul, is Yan. And wid the tea and stickin' to it I made out to stand it till the shore in the East began to turn black and the sky above it light.

"When the childer woke up wasn't they whoopin' wid the cough and wid surprise at findin' the 'Charity' out in the middle of the sea? But they're good young ones. Angeline got the breakfast and the other two took care of themselves. And Yan took a trick at the wheel while I minded the engine and warmed up me old bones. All the time, mind ye, the 'Charity' was thumpin' and splutterin' along in great shape. And about nine o'clock of as grand a winter morning as ever ye see she sailed into the harbor of Bayport as fine as an admiral's ship.

"'Where will she land?' ses Yan.

"'Sure, where ye see the coal pockuts,' ses I.

"As we swung up alongside the coal dock a feller come out on the end of it.

"'What boat's that?' ses he.

"'Tis a coal-boat,' ses I; 'wid coal in it.'

"'Ye've come to the right place,' ses he. And he helped us to tie up in a jiffy.

"'The boss will buy it off ye like a streak,' ses the man.

"'Maybe so, and maybe not,' ses I. 'Where is the boss?'

"Well, he showed himself comin' down the pier like a runaway.

"'Coal,' ses he; 'let me see it.'

"He seen it, and then we struck on a bargain. He'd give

me eight dollars the ton, and I held out for ten, cash down. In the course of the argyment he called me a robber.

“‘Robber is it?’ ses I. ‘All right, there’s likely other people in this town who want to buy coal and who are more perlite.’

“‘You can’t sell it except through me,’ he ses. ‘I’m the regular coal dealer.’

“‘And I’ve got the coal,’ ses I.

“The upshot of it was I struck a bargain wid me little man. I’d let him have fifty tons at eight dollars, and he’d let me sell the rest for what I could get, on his dock, and have the use of his scales, and hire a couple of his men to unload. Wid that settled I walked uptown and stopped in at the biggest stores, just mentionin’ that a coal boat was in and that we’d begin sellin’ in about half an hour.

“When I got back there was a mob on the ‘Charity,’ from old women wid buckets to well-to-do fellers who’d come wid a two-horse team. And as soon as Yan pointed me out they made for me.

“‘Gentlemin and ladies,’ ses I, ‘it’s ten dollars a ton.

“Most of them thought ’twas too much and told me so. But I told them there was places besides Bayport that wanted coal, and they could take mine or leave it. And after some argyment we got to work on a plan that I’d thought out in me mind while comin’ up. Yan bossed the unloadin’, and I looked after the weighin’ and takin’ in the cash. And I sold me coal to them as came wid pails at ten cents the pail; and to them as brought wheelbarrows at the rate of fifteen cents a pail; and anything over a wheelbarrow full at the rate of ten dollars a ton. And no one, if I could help it, got more than a ton. But they put up tricks on me. There was one feller had a gang of boys buyin’ pails full and dumpin’ ’em in a wagon that was hid behind the fence. And there was honest lookin’ men come back for their second ton and swore themselves blue in the face tellin’ me they’d never been near me. And the fights I had about the weights. But that coal went and you could see the whole town of Bayport gettin’ red in the face wid the joy of gettin’ warm again. And when I turned in that night so tired I could hardly stand or see, and saw all them winders in the town lighted up, I ses to mesilf—

“‘They may send ye to jail for it, Mary McGonigle, but to-day ye done a good turn of business.’

"The next mornin' we turned over the fifty tons to the dealer, and pretty well cleaned up the cargo. And along toward the end when trade was gettin' slack, a little pompous major-general sort of a feller, in a fine carriage wid a coachman, came down on the dock in a hurry.

"Me good woman,' ses he, 'what are ye sellin' yer coal at?'

"Fifteen dollars the ton,' ses I.

"Fifteen—!' ses he. 'No, no, I know better. You're sellin' it at ten, and an outrageous price at that.'

"It's gettin' scarce,' ses I, 'and the price has gone up.'

"Oh that's nonsense,' ses he. 'I'm unhappily a little short of coal, but I'll pay no such price as that. Why, me money is invested in coal mines, and me son-in-law is the president of one of the coal-carrying railroads.'

"I'm in the coal business meself,' ses I, 'and I've learned a thing or two about their way of doing business. Me price is fifteen.'

"Well, he blustered and he argued and he said he'd have me indicted. But I showed him there was mighty little coal left in the 'Charity,' and said nary a word about the fifty tons at the dealer's. And the upshot was I sold him five tons at fifteen dollars. But me conscience reproached me.

"Ye ought not to have done it, Mary McGonigle,' ses I; 'sellin' five tons to one man and the poor folks of the town wantin' coal so.'

"So I goes up to the office of the dealer and asks him if he won't set aside some of his coal, the same as I done, at ten cents a pail for the poor people. And he, as I'd been told, bein' a politician, and the reporter of the Bayport newspaper bein' in his office, he said he'd set aside five tons. He didn't say it though with a pleased air.

"But we parted good friends. He wanted to know when I'd be up again wid a load of coal, and to be sure to let him have a chance at the cargo. But before I set foot on the 'Charity' he come after me hot foot.

"What's this I hear?' he ses, mad as a hornet. 'Ye sold five tons to Mr. Wells at fifteen dollars the ton?'

"Ye hear right,' I ses.

"What d'ye mean by it? He's my customer. What d'ye mean by it?' he bawls.

"It's my coal he asked for and got,' ses I.

“‘The cheek of ye,’ he ses. ‘Why, that man owns coal mines. And his son-in-law is the president of the Wyomin’ Valley Railroad.’

“So that’s me story, Mr. McNamara. I’ve done a good turn of business, wid over nineteen hundred dollars hidden around in me clothes; but I’m not sure I haven’t overdone me business a bit. What’ll Mr. Courtenay say when he hears how I stung his father-in-law? And how will I settle



wid the railroad company and get away wid some of me profits? Them are questions I’ve come down to ask you, while I’ve left the ‘Charity’ up beyond City Island out of the way of the perlice.”

“Mrs. McGonigle,” I said, “there is one thing for you to do, and that is to see the president of the Wyoming Valley Railroad yourself.”

"Before the perlice sees me," said Mrs. McGonigle grimly. "Yes, that's good advice."

"And tell him your whole story." I added.

"Um-m-m," said Mrs. McGonigle. "And how about his father-in-law?"

"Have you considered, Mrs. McGonigle," I asked, "what relation the wife of Mr. Wells is to the president of the Wyoming Valley Railroad? No? His mother-in-law."

A gleam shot from Mrs. McGonigle's shrewd eyes, and she brought her big, knuckled fist down on my desk with a thump.



"That's an idee," she cried, "and I'm the woman to follow it up. Good-bye, and thankye kindly. I'll let ye know how I come out. And ye'll help us if we get into throuble, Yan and me and Angeline and Alberta and little Agathar."

Some hours later my telephone bell rang. I put the receiver to my ear, and straightway withdrew my ear from

the receiver. After another and more cautious trial I thought that a bellows must be operating at the other end, such a snorting and puffing came crackling along the wire. Gradually I distinguished a human voice, evidently in very close proximity to the telephone, and speaking in a tone of thunder.

"Is this Mr. McNamara himself?"

I breathed softly that it was.

"Well," buzzed the telephone with a series of gurgles and snaps, "I seen Mr. Courtenay—and he says—I'm too smart a woman to stay—out of the coal business."





DRAMA in the Pine Forest: The Story of a Russian Detective, by Fred Wishaw*

NICHOLAS SMIRNOF returned to his lodgings in the Smaller Morskaya in St. Petersburg after a fatiguing day's work. Smirnof was a detective officer, a member of the famous "Third Department" whose ramifications in the country of the Tsar are unlimited, whose unsuspected members may be one's brother, one's father, one's sister, one's master, one's servant, the beggar on the footpath, the painted lady in her carriage, the very lacquey that stands behind the sledge of the Tsar.

Nicholas Smirnof had an important case in hand. It had been placed in his charge because, though a young man, he was recognized by the chiefs of his department as one of the acutest of all their many un-uniformed employees, because the matter was urgent, and the capture to be made was of first-class importance.

Smirnof sat and talked with his young wife, the samovar hissing comfortably between them; he sipped his scalding tea and nibbled his lump of sugar.

"No luck again," he told his wife dejectedly. "I wish for two reasons they had given the case to anyone else!"

"They wouldn't, *doosha moyu*," she replied; "it is too imperative; they must employ their best agent, and that is—you."

"Yes, if it were any other job; but this—well, in the first place I never, as you know, believed in this poor chap's guilt when we caught him and got him sent away; and now that he has escaped, I don't fancy I shall find him again. He is as clever as they are made; the thing will be a failure, and I

*From Longman's Magazine.

shall lose caste at the Department. I wish to heaven they had given the job to Katkof, or Valooyef, or anyone else."

"His wife is a pretty little woman," said Mrs. Smirnof coquettishly.

"Bah—one pretty little woman is all that I have eyes for. I am sorry for her—an old friend, and all that—and for him too; but of course the fact of our being old friends would not influence me in the slightest degree in the performance of my duty, and the Department knows that well enough, or I should not have got the job. It is partly because I know poor little Melnikof so well that I am set to catch him. Melnikof probably never knew the nature of my employment under Government; he always imagined me to be an ordinary *chinovnik* a common Civil Service clerk—"

"So did I," laughed Olga Smirnof, "until you married me and took me into your full confidence. I little knew what a fox's lair I was coming into when you brought me here, *dooshka!*"

Smirnof laughed and kissed his wife's hand; he was about to reply when an official note was brought in to him.

"Bad luck to the Department and all its ways!" he exclaimed with annoyance, reading the letter. "I've got to go out again, Olga."

"Is it news of Melnikof?" asked Olga.

"Heaven knows," said her husband; "I don't."

At the Department Smirnof was ushered immediately into the presence of a very high official—quite the highest.

"Smirnof," said the great man, "I am somewhat disappointed in you. I had expected ere this to hear definite news of progress. You know how great an importance is attached by me to the capture of Melnikof. I may say that his Imperial Majesty himself is aware of the state of affairs, and is anxious that the miscreant should be arrested; yet you have done nothing."

"I am busy, Excellence. I am following more than one trail. In a day or two days I trust that—"

"Sooner, let us hope. Fortune, perhaps, favors you in this instance. See here!"

The great man threw across the table a dirty sheet of paper upon which were scrawled the following lines:

"To his Excellency the Chief Officer, Third Department, St. Petersburg.

"Ryabova: March 14.

"There has been observed in the woods about here a stranger of suspicious appearance. If your Excellency should consider it worth your while to send an officer, I shall be ready to show him where the individual may be seen.

KOSHKIN."

"Good," said Smirnof; "that is well. This is one of the trails I have under observation—the Ryabova district."

"Who is this Koshkin?"

"A gamekeeper. There is an English shooting-club in the neighborhood, and this man watches the country to prevent poachers from stealing the game. I have warned all such people in the districts around St. Petersburg to keep their eyes open."

"Good—you have done more than I thought. You had better attend to this stranger at once. Shall you require men? police, uniformed or otherwise? Take what you require."

"I shall consider and make my own arrangements. You may trust me, Excellence; by this time to-morrow night, if all goes well, Melnikof shall be safely lying in the fortress yonder."

"Well, he is badly wanted, and neither you nor I nor the prestige of the Department will suffer if matters turn out as you expect. Good-night, and good luck attend your efforts."

This man Melnikof had, but a year ago, been accused of a grave political offense. He had not committed the crime, but there had been a miscarriage of justice. Melnikof had long been a *persona ingrata* at the Detective Department, and when an attempt had been made to shoot an unpopular Minister at the front door of his Chancellery, Melnikof had been arrested on suspicion, "tried," convicted, and sent to Siberia to work on one of the agricultural penal settlements there. The real culprit escaped, but Melnikof was among the bystanders when the shot was fired; the Department had made up its mind that if he had not actually pulled the trigger he would be a very good substitute for the man who did, hence his arrest and banishment.

Melnikof, be it admitted, though not the prime offender,

had long been a sympathizer with the party of disaffection in Russia; he may even have known of the intended crime. But at any rate he was not the actual offender, and the astute Smirnof was perfectly right in his belief in the man's innocence.

Melnikof had somehow contrived to escape, to dodge the spies and human bloodhounds scattered over the forests and villages of Siberia, through or near which escaped convicts must pass in whichever direction they would fly—indeed, his romantic adventures would fill a volume with matter of no ordinary interest—and had eventually reached in safety the neighborhood of St. Petersburg itself. But to enter the metropolis was a difficult matter; and for a week he had prowled the woods at night, lying hidden by day, existing as best he could upon anything he could beg, bag, or steal, seeking ever, yet never finding, some opportunity to enter the city. Once there, his wife would, he knew, have some scheme ready at the instant for his departure out of the country, for she had been duly informed of his escape; but he dared not show himself by day, and even by night he had not as yet found an opportunity to make his final dash for home and liberty. Up to this point he had been tracked every inch of the way, though his pursuers were always several days behind him. By careful hiding he had now, he knew, given check to his enemies; but he must be found eventually if he lingered much longer, and meanwhile it was difficult to live, for food must be begged or stolen, unless game could be caught, and the cold at night was still intense.

Smirnof was not long in making his arrangements for departure. He went home straight from the Department to consult his wife, in whose good sense he had the greatest confidence.

"I am off at once, Olga," he said. "A man down Ryabova way has reported a stranger lurking in the woods; this is probably Melnikof. At any rate I must go and see for myself. You are not to expect me until you see me."

"Don't get into trouble," said his wife. "Melnikof may be desperate."

"I shall be armed," said Nicholas. "If I find him it will be a case of 'hands up,' for he shan't see me till I am sure of him."

Then Smirnof sent out for a *troika*, a sledge drawn by three

horses harnessed abreast, and set off upon his cold journey of twenty miles by road, wearing long Russian hunting boots, warmly lined throughout with felt, and reaching to his hips. A warm *polooshoobka*, a peasant's sheepskin tunic, surmounted by a huge fur mantle, large enough to envelop him to the heels, completed his visible costume; in his pocket was a handy little revolver, a necessary companion in such an enterprise as that in which he was now about to embark.

Olga Smirnof watched him drive away with a sigh.

"I that ought to help him all I can—and would if I dared!" she murmured. "Oh, what fools the agitators make of us! Nicholas is good to me, and this is how I must repay him—I *must*, or—"

Olga had herself been a member of one of the many secret societies existing in Russia. She had not, indeed, had dealings with any of the more extreme of the revolutionary circles; her part had been mere passive sympathy with those who endeavored to wrest from their rulers a greater measure of freedom than authority cared to give them. She had pledged herself to help on "the good work" in any way she could: by keeping her eyes open, by warning any who might be in danger, by financial aid—if she happened to be in funds. Her husband well knew of her connection with these societies before marrying her; indeed, it was through shadowing her in consequence of that connection, when discovered, that he presently made the acquaintance with her which ultimately led to marriage.

"Shall I denounce you or marry you?" he had asked, laughing; and Olga had chosen matrimony.

"You will have to break with these foolish people," said Nicholas. "Your own particular circle is harmless—oh, we know all about them; but there are affiliations and ramifications which might at any time get you into trouble, and that would not do for the wife of a detective of No. 3 Department!"

Olga had laughed and promised to renounce all connection with her former associates, if they would allow her; and indeed those associates never troubled their heads about Olga, being—as Nicholas said—members of a harmless body of discontents. Knowing their own harmlessness, they were not even alarmed when Olga married a *chinovnik*. Had they known that Smirnof was a detective, they might have felt uncomfortable, but of this they were ignorant—all but one

of them, Vera Sooshkin. Vera had herself lately married. She had married a member of a far more dangerous circle than her own, no other than Melnikof, whose acquaintance we have already made. Vera had come in haste and agitation to her old friend Olga, hearing of her marriage.

"Do you know what you have done, Olga?" she said. "You have married one of the bloodhounds. Did you know it?"

"I do now; I did not at first," said Olga. "But how do you know of it, Vera?"

"There is not much that my husband does not know about the bloodhounds," replied Vera. "You must take care, Olga; marriage does not release you from your vows of allegiance to us, you know. In case of anything—you are still bound to be on our side."

"I am going to know nothing. I shall be on neither side, though, of course, I shall sympathize with my husband," said Olga firmly.

"Well, take care; *my* husband's party are strong and vengeful people, you know, and they may expect you to help us—"

"I shall do nothing against my husband. You are not a true friend, Vera, if you allow your man to inform his party of the circumstances—"

"I hope there will be no need," said Vera; "it would only be in emergency."

But the emergency arrived. Nicholas Smirnof had been entrusted with the capture of Melnikof, and those in St. Petersburg who belong to the circle of the escaped convict were mysteriously and promptly aware of the appointment. Vera Melnikof quickly appeared at Olga's lodging.

"Your man has been told off for the capture of my Sasha," she said; "are you aware of it?"

"Certainly," replied Olga, her heart sinking. "Why do you ask?"

"You will be expected to supply us with information."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. How can you expect it, Vera?" said the other, doing her best to maintain a bold appearance. "If you are a faithful wife, I am another."

"It is not a case of individual wishes, or of what one will or will not do; it is a case of *must*. The Brotherhood insist. I am merely their mouthpiece. What I have said I have been sent to say."

"I do not believe it, Vera. You are his wife, and you are acting as a wife would and should. I do not blame you. But I am a wife also, and will do my duty to my husband."

"Then take care! You say you do not believe me; I swear to you that I have received my instructions to demand of you as I have now demanded, and to acquaint you with the decision of the Council, which is that the Council must be satisfied of your obedience, or—" Vera paused.

"Or my assassination will follow—I understand. Well, let them do as they please. I can strike as well as they, and you—Vera—would naturally be the first victim, though I should regret it."

"You mean that, rather than keep us informed of any news there may be of Sasha you will denounce the Brotherhood in my person. Now see, Olga, how foolish that would be. I might be arrested—true; but the bloodhounds would follow no farther upon the track. On the other hand, you would certainly perish; possibly my husband would suffer also. Nicholas might or might not gain the distinction of capturing Sasha, but in any case he would lose you. Place one thing against the other; does he gain in the end, or lose?"

Olga reflected awhile.

"What, exactly, do they require of me?" she asked at length.

"Information as to Sasha's movements. He has gone out of our sphere of knowledge. If he is seen or heard of in his present hiding-places it can only be through spies on your side; he cannot, poor lamb, communicate with us. Olga, I have not pressed my own personal claims upon you, because, as you point out, you too are a wife and love your husband; but place yourself in my position. I want him, Olga; God knows how I want my husband back. I have a little child, and she too wants her father. Let all this weigh, if you will, with the other. We are wives; our husbands are good men both—most unfortunately their interests conflict at this point, but what might happen would be far worse both for you and for me than what has thus far happened. I will tell you one more thing. If he returns we shall escape that very day over sea. All is prepared; it can be done and shall be done, and we shall not return. From the other side of the water I swear that I will befriend your husband. If he loses caste over this matter, I shall send him information which shall

a thousand times redeem the present failure. There are plots and schemes in the air. I will give him timely warning which shall enable him to do the Department such service that no officer in their employ shall hold his head so high as Nicholas."

"Stop," said Olga. "Vera, it may be right or it may be wrong, but I think I must do as you suggest. I dread the assassin's knife—I am a coward; my husband would not have me killed to save his reputation—he loves me. Also I am unwilling that you should suffer—stay; swear to me that what you have said is true! that your circle have threatened me."

"Heaven knows it is the truth. I am a slave because our society—yours and mine—is affiliated with that of Sasha. Sasha is a slave also. He is not an extremist, though in moments of excitement and indignation he has both done and said foolish things; but he would never counsel assassination, still less take part in any violent measures. He is entirely innocent of the crime for which he suffered."

"Well, you shall hear, I swear it. If Nicholas receives information as to your husband's movements, you shall be warned in time."

"God bless you, Olga. You have saved three lives—your own, Sasha's and mine; for indeed I should not survive it if he were now taken and punished. I know not that you have not saved your husband's also, for, believe me, he is in danger. As it is—well, you will see that you have acted wisely."

And now, on the night of Smirnof's departure for Ryabova, Olga hastened to give the news to her friend.

"Probably Nicholas will find and capture him this very night," she said, "if this turns out to be he. If so, how will it help you? He will be taken to the fortress. Your Council would scarcely attempt a rescue from there!"

"Once he is taken, my husband will know how to proceed." Vera smiled. "That is a matter long since arranged between us—before he escaped. One thing only I can promise, that your Nicholas shall suffer no harm."

Meanwhile Smirnof drove as rapidly as possible toward Ryabova. The sledge roads were in their usual spring-time state of almost impassableness. The sun of day warred with the frosts of night; the sun converted the snow into muddy

slush, which at night hardened into iron-bound ridges and ruts. The discomfort of driving over such roads at this season is unspeakable, but the heart of Nicholas was full of rejoicing, and he thought little of such small matters. At the village of Sosna he left his *troika* and engaged a small rustic sledge, for it would not be wise to approach Ryabova in the larger vehicle, lest it should be seen or heard from the hiding place of Melnikof, which might be near the road, and rouse his suspicions.

At Ryabova he easily found Koshkin the keeper.

"Ah, you have come," said that individual. "Good; I could not remember your name, therefore I communicated with the Department."

"Is he still about here?" asked Nicholas, and waited breathless for the answer.

"Certainly; he goes every evening to the same place, hoping to catch a black-cock at the springtide *tok*. I would have bagged him for a poacher, but that I remembered your warning, and thought he might be the chap you want."

"He has not seen you, has he, or been alarmed in any way?"

"Heaven forbid! I am not such a fool. I see a fifty-rouble note in this job."

"You shall have it if this is the man. If he attends the black-cock *tok* it is time we went into the forest. Is there a *shalashka* ready built?"

"It is that he uses, confound his impudence, every night."

"Dear Saints!—stop—he has no gun, of course?"

"Gun? poor wretch—no, nothing but his hands; yet he has had one black-cock, if not two."

"Come, man; we can talk as we go—take me to the *shalashka* quickly—describe the fellow—you saw him clearly and in daylight?"

"No, in half-light, when he left the *shalashka* at dawn. He is a small man, smaller than you or I."

Arrived in the forest the conversation dropped, and all further talk was in whispers; the men crept forward silently, picking their way in order to go noiselessly. It was now midnight.

"He comes at half-past one—before the black-cock," whispered Koshkin. "You are in good time. Here is the open space in which the *shalashka* stands. It is now fifty

paces from us, straight for that large star. Shall you be able to find it?"

"Easily. Stop here, Koshkin. You have your big *tooloop*; you will not be cold. It is possible that I may want you, though unlikely. Lie here, and make no sound."

Smirnof crept out into the open space, surrounded by pine forest, in the midst of which the *shalashka* stood: a little conical shelter made of pine poles placed in a circle of six feet diameter at the base, but converging to a point at top. The interstices between the poles are filled with pine branches twisted in and out. Within is accommodation for two men, or three at a pinch. These little huts are run up for the use of the sportsmen during the spring tournaments of black game. Hidden in his little sanctuary the gunner may listen to the game arriving in the darkness; he may hear them challenge and fight, and when light comes he may watch the fun—an entertaining spectacle—or kill a bird or two, at will; for the black-cock are by this time so intent upon the business of the moment that they will not always fly, even at a gun-shot.

Smirnof had no difficulty in finding the *shalashka*, though the night was dark. Working noiselessly, he removed the branches loosely set against the poles in one place in order to admit of ingress, entered the hut, and replaced the branches. Then he cautiously adjusted his dark lantern, taking a single instantaneous glance at the interior of the shelter as he did so. The floor was covered with dry moss, a foot in depth. One corner was indented as though a man had lain there; Smirnof sat down in the opposite corner, wrapped his fur around him, felt that his revolver was ready to hand, and waited.

The night without was as still as the very grave, and as cold. A heavy frost was in the air, but no wind moved among the pine trees. There was no sound, excepting—at intervals—the thud of a mass of snow falling from the branches of some tree in mid-forest. Suddenly a willow grouse, the male bird, pioneer of the coming dawn, uttered his loud, strident, laughing cry within a biscuit-toss of the shelter, startling Nicholas from the light doze into which he had fallen. The immediate reply of the hen-bird, the soft "ki-wow," five times repeated, reassured him. "That won't do," thought Nicholas; "I was nearly asleep! If the *kooropatka* had not sung out I might have gone off!"

Suddenly there came a different sound. Far away in the

forest, someone—or some large animal—was on the move. Footsteps, slow and careful: this might be Melnikof coming—it might also be fox, wolf, lynx, bear—anything.

Smirnof held his breath and listened. Undoubtedly the footsteps approached; slowly but surely they came nearer. Then another sound—a muffled cough; it was a man, sure enough. The footsteps drew near and nearer; now they were crossing the open, now they paused at the entrance to the *shalashka*. A man removed the loose branches and entered, closing the aperture behind him, as Nicholas had done. Nicholas shrank into his corner in order that he might not be touched and discovered. It was pitch dark; he would not be seen.

Then the new arrival sighed and groped his way to the corner in which Smirnof had observed his nest. He lay down, and Smirnof listened as he sighed and sobbed and muttered, apparently praying. So a quarter of an hour passed. Nicholas was in hopes that the fellow would fall asleep; this would be as well, for he could then make absolutely sure of him; if it should come to a fight the darkness was all in favor of an unarmed man.

Suddenly there fell a startling hubbub of great flapping wings without. A large bird came hurtling through the darkness and alighted, with a thud and a grunt or croak, close to the hut. This was the first of the black-cock, the challenger *par excellence*, the King of the *Tok*, as the Russians call him. Smirnof heard his companion hold his breath and listen, then relapse into his couch and breathe again. Smirnof's own eyes were growing accustomed to the darkness, and he fancied that he could now almost discern the outline of the figure that lay in the moss opposite. If this were so, the other would soon make him out also, and the crucial moment would arrive.

"God send he may fall asleep first," thought Nicholas.

Presently a second black-cock approached. There was the din of flapping wings, the thud of his settling, and instantly following came the challenge "Chu-wish—chu-wish," responded to in a moment by the first arrival. The *tok* was beginning.

Smirnof heard his companion move. Gazing intently into the darkness, he thought he saw him rise and kneel, peering

through the pine branches as though he would see what passed without.

"I must wait a bit," came the whisper: "it's too dark yet."

The *tok* began and developed, the challenging became fast and furious. More black-cock knights arrived, and more again; judging by the sounds without the shelter there were fights in progress at every point; flappings of wings, challenges, even the stamping and scuttling of the feet of the combatants were audible on all sides.

The light strengthened. Smirnof was no longer in any doubt as to whether he really discerned the figure opposite or only imagined it. He distinctly saw his man rise and step across to his side of the shelter. He actually bent over Smirnof's legs and began stealthily to remove a pine-branch. In doing so he suddenly touched one of Smirnof's boots.

With an exclamation of terror he started back, and sat down in his own place, holding his breath—watching—as though he scarcely dared to formulate his fears.

Smirnof now judged that the time had come for action.

"Yes," he said aloud, "Sasha Melnikof, it is a man; it is I, Nicholas Smirnof. You are caught, my friend; do not play the fool, for my revolver is at this moment covering you."

"It is God's will!" exclaimed Melnikof, with a choking sob. "And it is you that have captured me, Nicholas! Well, fear not, I shall not resist. I am weary of this existence, the cold, the hunger, the fever, the being hunted—my God! yes, I am glad it is over—"

"How have you lived these days?" asked Nicholas.

"Each night I have caught one black-cock—I pounce upon them in the darkness as they fight—it is easily done. I was about to do this when I touched your foot. My God—it is cold."

"I have more clothes than I need," said Nicholas; "you shall wear my *poloo-shoobka*; this big *tooloop* is enough for me."

Smirnof took off his sheepskin and handed it across. "We will wait until it is light enough to see our way; put it on and rest awhile—sleep, if you like."

"No, I sleep by day. I would rather talk. Nicholas, in pity—is my wife well? and the little one?"

"They are well."

Melnikof crossed himself piously and muttered inaudible words. Then he began, and for an hour he spoke of his adventures: his escape, his life in forest and moorland, pursued, befriended by peasants, a beggar, starving at times, yet determined to reach his home; "for I must see my dear wife and the little one before I die," he ended, sobbing.

Nicholas was a soft-hearted man, and pitied his old friend, but with him duty was paramount.

"It's no use, Melnikof," he said. "I am sorry for you, but I have my career to think of, and my duty to my employers."

"Of course—I do not ask a favor of you, Smirnof; I am not a fool. What I would suggest, if you allowed me, is in the nature of a bargain by which we should both gain." He paused.

"Well?" said Smirnof; "go on."

"There are papers of importance at my lodging; in exchange for these papers, or rather for disclosing their whereabouts—my wife does not know of them and could not help you to find them—I swear to you that you will not find them without my aid—I demand half-an-hour with my wife and child."

"I being present?"

"You being present. These papers would be a valuable possession to you, Smirnof; their discovery would be a feather in your cap. With them in hand and my wretched self captured—which has been a wonderful feat, and quite incomprehensible to me—your career is made."

"Well, I agree. I may be blamed for it, but I will do as you suggest. Perhaps we had better start at once. If I were seen driving with you to your wife's lodgings it might be misunderstood. It is now two o'clock—we shall reach town by five; the streets will be empty. Before six we shall be at the Department."

The black-cock were in the very midst of the excitement of battle and bloodshed. A belligerent pair were hectoring and threatening within a yard or two of the *shalashka* as the two men stepped out and disturbed them. Both birds flew off with a loud tumult of beating wings. The noise gave pause to the dozen duels going on at every point: as the two men stamped over the frozen ground bird after bird rose and fled away, some settling close by and continuing their heated arguments, others flying as far as the forest, to sit and chal-

lenge upon the nearest tree. A crane screamed out in the half frozen marsh land a mile away.

Melnikof, though he had sighed and wept in the first shock of his capture, was now in better spirits. "I am glad it is over—this hunted existence," he repeated more than once; "and I shall see my dear wife and the child, thanks to you. God bless you for it, Smirnof."

"Don't thank me," said Nicholas; "it's a matter of business."

Two hours later the three horses of Smirnof's *troika* clattered through the streets of St. Petersburg and drew up at the house in which was Vera Melnikof's flat, a modest lodging at the top of the huge building.

"Dear Saints, how I tremble!" exclaimed Melnikof, as his companion rang the bell.

"You have not yet told me where the papers are to be found," said Smirnof.

"In the kitchen there is a stone let into the floor in front of the cooking-stove; they are beneath that stone. Someone answers the bell—it is she—Verochka, my beloved!"

"Come into the sitting-room—you also, Nicholai Stepanitch, I will set the samovar before you—you have had a cold drive. Will they try you again, my Sasha? will they acquit you?"

"*Dooshka*, we have but half-an-hour, and that thanks to Smirnof; thank him, you too! but for him, my beloved, we should not have met. Where is the little one? bring her."

The half-hour passed very quickly. Smirnof sat stolidly by and watched and listened while father and child and mother—the child very sleepy and frightened—talked and embraced and wept together. Then all adjourned to the kitchen, and the stone was prised up by Smirnof with an axe. Sure enough, there lay a dusty packet of papers beneath it. Smirnof glanced at the bundle and pocketed it.

"You have performed your share of the contract, Sasha, and I have performed mine," he said. "Time's up. I am sorry, Vera Ivanovna; you will understand."

"Go, then, husband; stay—one more embrace!" she flung her arms about Melnikof's neck. "Go, and God keep thee!" she said aloud; and she whispered in his ear, "Walk in front when you reach the bottom of the stairs."

At the foot of the dark, unlighted stone staircase, gloomy

even in full daylight, almost pitch dark at this early hour of morning, Melnikof was walking in front. Two men suddenly fell upon Smirnof, who was just behind him; one placed something over his mouth, the other held his arms. Smirnof struggled and tried to cry out, but the men were powerful; he was helpless in their clutches, and the gag upon his mouth and nose prevented him uttering a sound.

"I am done for," thought Smirnof. "I ought not to have—"

Then suddenly consciousness left him.

When he regained his senses he lay upon his own bed at home. It was broad daylight. His wife, Olga, sat by his bedside sewing.

"Olga—what is it—what has happened?" he said. "Where is Melnikof? Have I been ill? Did I dream it, or did I go out and capture Melnikof?"

Olga kissed her husband and smoothed his forehead with her hand. You must have been ill, *dooshka moya*," she said.

"You went to make a capture, but a few hours later there was a ring at the bell—this was five in the morning—and I found you lying unconscious at the door. Who left you there I know not."

"Olga, we are ruined!" he sobbed, remembering all. "I captured him and allowed him to escape." Smirnof tried to rise, but fell back. "My head!" he exclaimed. "How ill I feel! Go to the Department at once, Olga—stay; feel in the pocket of my *tooloop*, is there a bundle of papers?" The papers were there; Olga produced them.

"Thank God! they may save me," he said. "Leave them for me to look at, and go quickly to the Department. Bid them watch every station and every exit from the town; it is possible he may not yet have got away. Tell them I went to Melnikof's lodgings for papers and was there attacked and drugged. Explain all."

Fortunately for Smirnof, the papers proved to be of some value to the Department, and though the Chief looked coldly upon his outwitted employee for awhile Nicholas was not deprived of his seniority. But Melnikof was not found, neither was his wife. As a matter of fact, they had escaped by the early Finland train to Wiborg, reaching that city four hours later, while Smirnof still lay unconscious. At Helsingfors they caught the steamer starting for Stockholm. They

now live happily in London, where Sasha still associates occasionally with those who are in touch with the wire-pullers of anarchist and revolutionary circles. He has little sympathy with them; indeed he owes them a bitter grudge for a year of great misery, which might have lasted lifelong but for certain circumstances which have been set forth above. But both Sasha and his wife deem it a sacred duty to be upon terms with their old associates in order to keep faith with Olga and Nicholas Smirnof, to whom they consider they owe much, and who from time to time receive from them mysterious unsigned communications which are of the utmost value to Nicholas, and by virtue of which he has by this time achieved a reputation in the Department for astuteness and sagacity second to none in the Empire.

It was his marvelous discovery of a certain plot to wreck a train proceeding from the Crimea, a year or two ago, that procured for him the favor of some of the very highest personages in the realm. This discovery has ever since been a problem and a mystery to every other member of the Department, but presumably Smirnof himself knew to whom he was indebted for the timely information which enabled him to avoid the threatened catastrophe, for on that occasion he made this remark to his wife:

"One never know's one's luck. Only think of it: I go, thanks to my soft heart, and make an eternal idiot of myself by letting a poor chap say good-bye to his wife before disappearing for ever, and there comes of it—this!"

"This" was a photograph, framed in diamonds, of a grateful Imperial Highness!





SILVER Candlestick:

The Story of a Noble House,

by Edith King Latham



IT was a gift from my cousin, Mrs. Stephen Rogers, a childless widow of ample means, who devoted the greater part of her time to travel, wandering over the world, from country to country, at the dictation of her fancy.

Now and again, I would receive from Cousin Harriet a token of remembrance which told me in what particular corner of the globe to locate her. Among these, were a Zulu assegai, a Tanagra figurine, an embroidered satin waistcoat of Louis XIV, a Kurdish sword, a curious "longevity" teapot and some fine bits of ivory from China, and several pieces of rare porcelain and old silver, all of which chummed quite sociably in my den, ignoring the fact that they represented racial characteristics of antipodal remoteness.

The candlestick my cousin sent by a friend passing through San Francisco, en route to Honolulu. Accompanying the gift was a letter which read as follows:

"Perhaps you will not care for this souvenir of a far-away kinswoman, my dear Robert, but the dainty little candlestick attracted my fancy, the other day, in an out-of-the-way antiquary shop in London. The dealer was so evidently anxious to dispose of it, although he insisted on a rather stiff price, that I hinted my suspicions of stolen property. However, he told such a straightforward story that I believed him and gave him very nearly what he asked. You need not question the ethics of the transaction; it is only another case of impoverished nobility, and the dealer's desire to realize as much money as possible in order to start a new business in America where his daughter resides.

"I should like to keep the pretty bijou for myself, but

*Written for Short Stories.

that would be folly in such a bird of passage as I have become, so I send it on to you to find a place on the dusty, bachelor shelves of your Russian Hill snuggery. The punches are almost obliterated, but you may be able to decipher enough to read the history of this aristocratic relic. It instantly impressed me with an uncanny feeling of the deepest mystery, which I am almost ashamed to confess. You know my weakness. I went back two days later, to the antiquary's, hoping to gain further particulars, but the place was closed and the man gone.

"Now don't laugh at my girlish enthusiasm; even globe-trotting has not cured it. Who knows but that you may find, by this means, your elusive Great Story? You will, no doubt think me very silly, but at least, believe me

Your always affectionate sister-cousin,

HARRIET WINSTON ROGERS.

Until Dec. 1st, *Aux soins de Carillon Frères,*
Paris."

The candlestick was a small affair, not more than six inches in height, of good design and workmanship, representing a cherub holding aloft a torch in the top of which was the receptacle for a small candle. On the base was stamped a crest, badly defaced, with the letters E. V. underneath.

In the press of some rush work for my publisher, my romance-loving relative and her pretty gift were alike forgotten, for the time, until Cousin Harriet's hinted mystery was suddenly brought to light by an extraordinary intervention of fate.

On a rainy evening in January, while climbing the steep stairway which led to my eyrie, I was unlucky enough to slip and badly injure a tendon of my right ankle. Following this accident came a severe attack of the grippe which drove away all inclination to serious mental exertion. To beguile the tedium of the double convalescence, I resolved to take up the study of the mandolin. A Club friend purchased for me a sweet-toned instrument, and the music dealer sent up a teacher, a new acquisition to San Francisco's musical circles, whose method and execution he warmly praised.

After two or three lessons, I was pleased to find myself progressing famously in the use of the plectrum, under the

direction of the shabby Italian whom I found a man of such charm and culture as to cause one to forget his poverty-stricken appearance. On the day of the fourth lesson a severe wind and rain storm came on, and the unpaved streets on the hill were soon streaming with yellow rivulets. I persuaded Signor Eccolare to remain until the storm had somewhat abated and lunch with me, urging it as a personal favor to a restless shut-in, as I observed the man hesitate. When Wong Lee had removed the dishes and brought on the cigars, I suggested going into the "den" to see the vista of the Golden Gate from the wide window. It was too misty for a satisfactory view, so I turned to the curio corner for my guest's amusement. The Italian was greatly interested in the collection, as I related the history of my treasures. Knocking the ashes from my cigar, I picked up the silver candlestick and passed it to him. "Here, Signor, see if you cannot discover a romantic history for this pretty bauble," I said, laughing. "I have a cousin abroad, who has an idea—" I stopped, and clutched at the fellow who had turned to the color of the dead, and seemed on the verge of fainting. He tottered to a chair, while I hobbled on my crutches into the dining room and poured out a glass of wine. When Signor Eccolare had swallowed the stimulant, he revived somewhat and feebly drew himself up with a pitiful expression on his pale face, a mixture of sadness and joy. For several moments he did not attempt to speak, then he pointed a trembling finger at the candlestick which I had hastily set back upon the shelf. "For the love of heaven, tell me, when and where did you find it, and why is it here?" he gasped. I gave him the substance of my cousin's letter.

"Your relative would be displeased, doubtless, and you would refuse, should I ask you to part with it?"

I shot a rather sharp glance at the man. Signor Eccolare winced. "You think my request a strange one, Mr. Winston, but I do not ask the candlestick of you without remuneration. I have not sufficient money to tempt you, but I will give you for it this ring," he said, drawing from his finger a beautiful intaglio. "It was my father's, and my grandfather's, and the father of my grandfather received it from a long line of noble ancestors, yet I will give it in exchange for this little silver candlestick which, to you, is merely a trinket, but,

to me, means more than life, the return of peace and honor to the proud Vessanio. You asked me in jest for the history; yes, I can give it, if you will have the patience to listen."

"I will listen with the keenest pleasure imaginable," I declared, "but first let me make you more comfortable." I placed some pillows at his back and pushed a footstool at his feet, then letting myself gingerly down on a couch, I signed to him to proceed. Signor Eccolare gazed at the window, towards the rain-enshrouded mountains on the Main shore, with an absent expression.

"The house of Vessanio is of the oldest and most honorable in all Italy," he began. "I will not weary you by recounting the history of the dukes of Vessanio, but I will confine myself to the story of the silver candlestick.

"About the middle of the sixteenth century, Silvio de Vessanio purchased from a Florentine silversmith this pretty specimen of an artist's skill, and presented it to his newly-wed wife, the young Duchess of Pellarno. From the day when the Duke had presented it, the candlestick had stood upon a little table in her boudoir, holding a small wax candle which she caused to be lighted every night before retiring. The little taper gave a cheery, though not very powerful flame which the Duchess could see from her bedchamber, and which she liked to think, for she was of a fanciful turn of mind, guided her to dreamland. The Duke, who adored his wife, was glad to perceive the pleasure which his gift afforded, even though it served no higher purpose than to gratify the whim of a beautiful woman. It was, therefore, a sort of plaything, until at the death of Silvio, Duke of Vessanio, it became associated with gloom and mourning.

The happy married life of the young couple was suddenly darkened but little more than a year after their marriage, when, one terrible day, the Duke was brought back to the castle from a hunting tour, with a mortal wound. My ancestor lived to embrace for a last time his young wife and infant boy, and just as the sun was sinking into the arms of night, his eyes began to glaze with approaching death. As though dreading the journey through the dark, unknown passages, he begged piteously for light. At a word from the Duchess, the servants fetched all the candlesticks which they could hastily gather, and surrounded his bed, holding the dripping light aloft. But still the dying man was not satisfied. With the

reproachful gaze of an ailing child, he appealed to the weeping Duchess kneeling at his bedside.

"Light, *Elizabetta mia*, it grows ever darker; can you not give me light?" Torches were brought, but the Duke scarcely noticed them, and his pitiful cry went to the heart. In desperation, the distracted wife ran from room to room, but all the lights had been taken by the servants. Silvio was slipping into the darkness alone, and she could not help him!

Returning to the deathbed, the Duchess stumbled over the small table in her boudoir and, scarce knowing what she did, snatched up the little candlestick with its fresh taper. When she approached her husband with the flickering light which sputtered merrily, unabashed by the presence of death, the Duke gave a great sigh of relief, an expression of peace overspread his brow, and while the priest murmured the office for those *in extremis*, he raised himself, grasped the hand of his stricken wife, gazed intently at the form on the cross, and died.

"The Duchess did not long survive him, and the little candlestick afforded her the same comfort in dying that it had given her husband. Two months after his passing, it was given place among the great, tall stands which held solemnly blinking lights at the head of her bier. Ever since that time, it has been employed in the same sacred service for the dying and dead of the house of Vessanio, until five years ago, when it was stolen from my father's palace. It would be impossible to picture to any but a Vessanio the consternation caused by this catastrophe. My father, an aged man, approaching the close of life, was prostrated at the news. Three years before, the little candlestick had lighted my mother to the spirit world, and its sanctity was therefore, in his eyes, greatly enhanced. To die without this ceremony, which had now become almost as holy as the ministrations of the priest, was all but insupportable. My father was brought to his bed with a severe illness, but, although he seemed very near death, his spirit would not yield, something seeming to hold him to earth until the precious heirloom should be restored. My brother, my sister, and I were reduced to despair. Our home became a place over which death hovered with sinister gaze. Further and more terrible complications arose when it began to be whispered about that I had stolen the sacred candlestick, in order to prevent my brother's marriage with the Contessa

Lucia Faverra. It was my misfortune to also love the Countess, although the base thought of placing an obstacle in the way of my brother's choice had never entered my heart. But because it had become an unwritten law in our family that the Duke of Vessanio must present to his bride the little candlestick, the nuptial office of the heirloom had grown to be regarded as almost entering into the validity of the marriage. At least, it bestowed a feeling of sacred awe in its more cheerful service, which was very nearly as great as in its service of death. Therefore, it was small wonder that the voice of suspicion, when it had been turned from all others, should condemn me, and that, gradually, my father, my brother, my sister, and all believed me to be guilty, especially as I was observed to grow paler and more worn as the time approached which was to give to another the woman I madly loved. Alas, my father died in terrible agony of soul, reiterating the haunting fear that, as the custom of years was broken, he would be unable to find my mother in Paradise, without the help of the little talisman which had guided his ancestors to the brink of the river. I believe he was wandering in his mind, for the last rites did not give him comfort, and he passed from earth with a terrible cry which froze the blood to hear.

"I should have gone mad, or taken my wretched life, but for one slender ray of hope. Just before his death, my father turned to me who sat apart from the others at the death-bed, and said: 'Pietro, if you are guilty, God have mercy upon your wicked soul, for your father's curse will ever follow you, and his restless spirit will be caused to wander in endless unhappiness. But if you are innocent, set out and search the world for the stolen relic. When you have found and restored it, you will receive my blessing; you will also make possible the wedded happiness of your brother.' As soon, therefore, as my body is cold, go forth on your search, if you be not the craven thing suspicion has branded you. And may God help you to restore joy and remove disgrace from the proud name of the Vessanio.

"You may imagine, Signor Winston that, innocent as I was, I set out upon my quest as soon as my father's labored breathing had ceased, eagerly hoping that I might return with joy before the obsequies had taken place. But my efforts were fruitless, and the large rewards offered were unclaimed, as they had been from the first. Instead of returning to the

funeral, I wandered over Europe, and finally, reached New York where I was cruelly robbed by clever swindlers of the remainder of the sum of money given me at my father's request. I resorted to teaching Italian and the mandolin, and contrived to make a precarious living, meanwhile perfecting myself in the English tongue of which I had already considerable knowledge. By this time, I had relinquished all hope of ever again seeing the object of my quest, and despair sat hard upon me. All means for its recovery had failed.

"Three months ago, I learned through a friend in Italy, that my brother's love for the Contessa Faverra had at length defied the strength of tradition, and the marriage had taken place. But it was an almost joyless ceremony, through which a superstitious terror grimly stalked.

"Last June I embraced an opportunity of coming west as companion to an invalid, but restlessness again possessed me, and I felt impelled to journey further. I left Colorado four weeks ago, and in San Francisco, of all places the furthest removed from my thoughts, I find, without searching, the precious token for the lack of which the happiness of five lives was wrecked."

Completely unnerved, yet clutching at Cousin Harriet's gift as though fearing it might again be snatched from him, the man wept with great, tearless, heartbreaking sobs. I rose and hobbled to the window. "I'm awfully sorry for you, Signor Vessanio," I said awkwardly, "but the thing for you to do is to take the candlestick and get back to Italy as quickly as you can.

"And if you will allow me the privilege, I shall be happy to offer you a loan in the matter of tickets, and that sort of thing. It is sometimes a little inconvenient to be obliged to arrange, without preparation, for an expensive trip like this."

The man's emotion, for a few moments, quite overcame him. In a choking voice, he exclaimed gratefully, "Many, many thanks, my dear Mr. Winston, but you do not know me. I have no claim upon you who might rightfully challenge me to produce proofs of my statements, which would consume several weeks to accomplish."

"Nonsense," I exclaimed, "I don't ask proofs; your face speaks for you. And please keep the ring; all I ask is a letter describing the scenes at the Palazzo Vessanio when you arrive with the long-lost heirloom.

"Now let's see what steamer you can take if you leave on to-morrow morning's overland," I said, sitting down to the telephone.

Some weeks later, on my first visit to the Club since my accident, I was glancing through the London papers, when the sight of several lines in large type, at the head of a long column, caused me to sink back in the big arm chair with a sudden giddiness. This is what I read:

"FOUND IN SAN FRANCISCO!
A WORLD-FAMOUS RELIC.

"Story of the restoration of the priceless——candlestick, stolen three years ago from the——Museum in Rome.

"Thomas Swinlon, to whom was paid the immense reward offered by the Museum for the recovery of the valuable bit of silverware, and who immediately disappeared, is now known to have been but the agent for an exiled Italian with a long criminal record, who, under various aliases, has played the bunco game with a skilled hand. This time, it seems, fate took a hand in the game and sent him stumbling upon a most unlooked-for prize.

"The man is a rascal of rare cultivation, possessed of several accomplishments, a musician of no small talent, a fluent conversationalist in five different tongues, quick-witted to a degree, and endowed with the imagination of a novelist.

"Frequenters of the ——Museum will rejoice to learn that the precious relic will soon be restored to its accustomed place where it will once more become the center of attraction, by its association with one of the most tragic events of Italian history."

I have since learned the true story of Cousin Harriet's gift, but, although it is indeed a thrilling tale, I find myself reverting with greater fascination to the pathetic history of the mythical Vessanios, and, while I have devoted considerable valuable time to the memory of the lately departed "Pietro," I cannot prevent a feeling of sympathy for the poetic grief of the noble Italian family, as set forth by that artist in crime and literature, "Signor Eccolare," to whom, with respect, I dedicate his own fabrication.



HE Climax: A Story of an Irish Village, by Katherine Cecil Thurston*



MICHAEL Prendergast shut the door of his dispensary with a bang that sounded down the empty street, then lounged back against it and slowly lit his pipe. The life of an Irish doctor in an Irish village is peculiarly his own—as aloof from interference as his rough tweed clothes or his manner of speech. The pipe drew badly; with the deliberation that characterized all he did, Prendergast made his position more comfortable and struck another match.

It was an exceptional September day. Across the roadway the thatched roofs looked warm and brown as clustered bees; to his right the ducks clamored vigorously round the village pump; to his left, where the street curved, a fragment of sea showed between yellow and whitewashed houses like a steel band against the dazzling sky. He was no self-analyst, but he was aware of the light, clear warmth in a lifting spirit. Unconsciously he moved forward, and, looking up, let his eyes rest with a certain contentment on the battered house that spelt routine in his daily life—at the crooked window-sashes and the notice of his attendance in half-obliterated black letters on a white painted board: the whole comfortable discomfort that he had at first chafed at, then tolerated, at last learned to call life. For there is no place in the world where the lotus-eater matures more rapidly than in the solitary island shadowed by hills and lapped by tides. Like many another, Prendergast had begun life with purposes and energies; but the people, the atmosphere, the very soil of the country, are alien to such things: the solid wall of influences had prevailed, and his nature had dozed to sleep.

He was still gazing at the notice board, still ruminating

*From Blackwood's Magazine.

pleasantly—the tobacco in his pipe glowing as he drew and let go his breath—when a sound in the deserted street roused him. A man's laugh—its echo in a girl's voice—then footsteps, partly muffled in the sandy dust of the roadway. He turned abruptly, raised his cap, then drew back a step into his original position, slightly disconcerted for almost the first time in his recollection.

The girl's form was familiar—familiar enough to bring the slow blood to his face; but the man's was new, with the intolerable newness of an unexpected, unreckoned-with thing. He glanced over the slight figure in its spotless flannels, and felt suddenly and hotly conscious of his rough-cut tweeds: then the feeling fled before a fierce pang of self-disgust at his momentary weakness. At this precise moment the two in the roadway paused. The man looked coolly interested, the girl flushed with unwonted exhilaration.

"Good morning, Doctor Prendergast," she said. "This is Mr. Astley, the friend from London that we expected last night. His boat was kept back by the fog. He only arrived from Cloghal two hours ago." She spoke a little hurriedly, glancing from one to the other. Strangers were few at Rosscoe, and introductions rare.

When she ceased speaking there was a pause. A group of fishermen passed, carrying nets and lobster-pots, and the ducks by the pump scattered in confusion. Prendergast shifted his position awkwardly: the stranger, with absolute unconcern, screwed in his eyeglass, and surveyed him as he might an interesting monument.

"How d'you do?" he said.

Prendergast squared his wide shoulders. "This is a tame spot after London," he remarked. "How does it strike you?"

The other smiled. His smile, like everything from his immaculate panama to his doeskin boots, was cool and complete; it altered his face just enough to show a perfect row of teeth, but it left his satirical, questioning eyes untouched.

"The place is interesting," he said, "but it's the people I've come for. I'm rather studying the Celt." His words dropped out with great conciseness, each syllable cut and clear. Prendergast unconsciously began knocking the ashes out of his smouldering pipe. At this point the girl interposed.

"Mr. Astley is writing a great book," she said, "and

he's hunting for uncultivated types. Isn't that it?" She looked up with naïve admiration at the thin clean-shaven face.

The last shred of tobacco fell to the ground, and Prendergast raised his head. "He won't have to look far," he said.

Nancy Odell glanced round quickly. Ill-humor was new in Prendergast.

Astley let his eyeglass drop from his eye; it dangled from its string in the sun. "No," he said smoothly; "I've discovered that for myself."

The veiled sarcasm escaped Nancy; but Prendergast, without fully understanding it, flushed.

"Good-bye, Miss Odell," he said. "There's work waiting up at my place." He held out his hand.

The girl looked puzzled, then distressed. "Good-bye," she said. "And will you dine with us to-night? I know father wants you to—"

He hesitated. Her eyes were on his; Astley was lost in contemplation of the dispensary. "Very well," he agreed brusquely. "Thanks!" Lifting his cap, he turned on his heel and strode down the street toward his own house.

The new-comer turned, his lips curved into sarcastic amusement. "Miss Odell," he said, "I owe you an unpayable debt. I thought they had extinguished the primitive man some hundreds of years ago."

Prendergast reviewed many things that evening as he climbed the steep hill to the Odells'. It seemed that chance had taken Rosscoe—its picturesqueness, its lethargy, its negativeness—and, shaking it rudely, had set it down again in altered circumstances.

The sight of this stranger, with his cool superiority, his insolence, exhaling another atmosphere in every breath, had altered the very face of accepted things. The World had penetrated into the Wilderness, which in our day is tantamount to the Snake in Paradise.

He threw back his shoulders and quickened his pace; he held his head high, but there were misgivings in his heart. With slow exactness he ticked off events from the hour of his arrival in Rosscoe four years ago, beginning with the damp, drizzling day on which he had caught his first glimpse of Nancy Odell riding up the village on her chestnut cob—a slim girl of seventeen, with the longest and blackest eyelashes

he had ever seen and hair still bound in a dense thick plait. He recalled their first meeting and his subsequent invitation to the old house crumbling away under its ivy; and with the memory came his first impression of Nancy's father, Denis Odell, the man who after a brilliant career at college had returned to Rosscoe on his father's death, had taken up life there, had married, and had gradually, by a process so slow as scarcely to be discernible, passed from the ranks of those who do to the ranks of those who dream. He remembered everything—the whole chain of pleasant uneventfulness; the days that slipped to nights, the nights that merged to days, while outside, beyond the guarding sea and the wall of hills, life went on as usual—fevered, despairing, hopeful, tireless in its steady round. He stopped suddenly in his walk. What had he really done in those four years? The question glowered at him abruptly out of the falling dusk; with unaccustomed force it stormed his mind. He had done his duty, had earned his reputation for goodness of heart, had been charitable in his modest way. But what mite of knowledge had he given to the storehouse of his profession? What had he contributed towards the future of his own life? A great blank met his view—an appalling, yawning void. For two whole years he had been placidly in love. Until to-day the need to put even that love into expression had never touched his mind. He had been content in the silent acknowledgment of the fact. Nancy knew that he cared for her—must know it, he had reasoned; and for the rest—they were young, there was time enough. There was time enough! That had been his philosophy till now. Now somehow everything was changed.

His fingers moved with loose uncertainty as he opened the iron gate, then with a more hasty step than he had used for years he crossed the wide path to the house—the gravel crunching under his feet.

In the hall he was met by Odell. The old man looked unusually alert: some of the light that had been in Nancy's eyes that morning seemed to have passed to his.

"You've seen young Astley?" he said almost at once, linking his arm through Prendergast's and drawing him down the corridor to the drawing-room.

Prendergast answered churlishly in a monosyllable. Though

he had expected the words, he resented them now that they were said.

"A clever fellow! A man with a future! It has warmed my heart to see him, Prendergast. His father and I were old friends. Poor Ned! He had a great spirit, but he lacked the grit of this youngster. He belongs to the newer era, eh?"

He laughed with his hand on the drawing-room door, and for the first time Prendergast felt a tinge of alienism in the familiar house. It seemed that the brown walls stared down at him with an unaccustomed air, that there was a new note of criticism in the jar of the turning door-handle. Then he moved forward into the lighted room.

The room—so large and so suggestive of faded splendor, was softened by a great glow of candles; there were fresh curtains on the long windows, and the bowls of stock on the ancient grand piano seemed more numerous and more fragrant than usual. He felt each infinitesimal difference as he moved forward and took Nancy's hand.

In Nancy, too, there was a change. Her usual cotton dress was discarded for a muslin the color of her eyes; her beautiful hair was coiled with new care; a long gold chain, the only ornament she possessed, was twisted around her neck. Her youth, her charm, her buoyancy, struck Prendergast with a shock. He turned abruptly to where the other guest stood.

Astley came forward, and they shook hands. In dark clothes he looked even slighter of build and paler of face—the coldness of his eyes alone defying all changes of attire and alterations of light. His fingers pressed Prendergast's swiftly, then relaxed. They left the impression of steel—so firm and so lacking in all warmth was their touch.

"Miss Odell and I have been discussing temperaments," he said suavely. "I hold that reaction is the keynote of the Celtic nature; that the more lethargic it seems, the more volcanic its outbreak when the climax comes." He stopped and adjusted his eyeglass.

Prendergast felt his blood stir at the cool inquisitiveness of the stare, but he controlled the emotion.

"Such topics are beyond Rosscoe," he said. "Here the climax comes first, and we talk about it afterwards."

Astley inclined his head to one side and surveyed him attentively. "Then you never self-analyze?"

"Never!" rose emphatically to Prendergast's lips, but his host interposed.

"Dinner awaits us," he said. "We go in without ceremony, Astley—Doctor Prendergast knows that."

Prendergast straightened himself, drawing back against the piano to let Nancy pass; but Astley moved silently forward, and held the door ajar for her. He was rewarded with a very sweet smile as she passed into the hall.

That dinner lingered long in Prendergast's mind. Astley—superlatively interesting in ordinary moments—seemed to develop a fresh side when partaking of a meal. Where the rural mind grows dull, his galvanized. He talked much and talked well. Prendergast sat silent and oppressed while he touched on current literature, lingered over Socialism in its last developments, and rounded neatly off with a personal view on European politics. He watched Odell's absorbed face and Nancy's mystified admiration; then steadily enough his gaze moved on to the mirror hanging on the opposite wall and paused on his own reflection. The picture it rested on was not calculated to reassure. The eyes that met his own lacked color, the skin had an uncertain tone, the sandy hair refused to lie flat; lowering his glance, he arrested it once more, this time on the ill-knotted tie and badly fitting coat. How many times, he wondered, had he sat in that same seat and viewed that same image with no glimmering of shame while he criticized the new schoolmaster or discussed the prospects of the potato crop! At the thought he set his teeth.

Twice Astley appealed to him; but his ideas were glued together, and his answers were wide of the point. More than twice his host tried to draw him into talk; but the geniality sounded like condescension to his overstrained ears, and he responded ungraciously. His emphatic sense of failure hardened into pride. He thought savagely of the degrees he had taken, of the hours he had sweated, of the whole uphill fight, with little money and few friends, that had landed him where he was. As the thoughts came quick and bitter, the servant entered with coffee, liquers, whiskey, and hot water. With an impulse new in its directness, he pushed back his chair and rose. To the three surprised faces turned towards him his

expression seemed unchanged; to himself it felt convulsed and strange.

"Miss Odell," he said, "you mustn't mind if I say good-night. There's a poor woman on the cliff who wants seeing to. Old Mary Troy, sir,"—he turned to his host. "She's not long for this world, and I promised I'd look in before the night was out."

Odell looked up. "Tush, man! It's the old story. They're always going, and never gone. Sit down and have a glass of punch."

His tone was cordial, but Prendergast saw his eyes turn back expectantly to Astley's face.

"Thanks, sir; but it's a true bill this time. Good-night." He nodded to Astley. "Good-night, Miss Odell." His eyes rested on Nancy's face and his hand sought hers.

She pressed his fingers warmly, but her smile was preoccupied, her attention also was elsewhere. It was a curious fact, that of the three faces the one turned most steadfastly in his direction—the one to show most interest in his movements, most attention to his words—was that of his fellow-guest.

"Good-night," Nancy said quickly—"though you don't deserve even that. But if you must go, tell Mary I'll come and see her to-morrow before twelve. I ought really to have gone to-day."

"All right. Good-night."

Odell followed him to the hall and helped him into his overcoat. As he rolled up the collar, Astley's succinct voice reached them from the dining-room:

"So you are Lady Bountiful? You make me wish I had an interesting disease and a cabin on the cliff."

Odell laughed. By an immense effort Prendergast echoed the sound, then, shaking hands hurriedly, he opened the door with a wrench and passed out into the chill quiet.

Leaving the grounds, he turned—not upwards towards Mary Troy's cottage, but downwards, steadily and directly to the sea. Deception in any form was foreign to him, but the moment had come when he must have a new atmosphere. Leaving the road, he gained the rocks by a footpath, and, crossing them with steady, accustomed feet, paused on the outer ledge, took off his cap, and let the air blow strongly through his rough hair. Outwardly he was calm and dogged; so also, by a strange affinity, was the mass of water at his feet.

The oily sheen of autumn was over the black waves as they sucked and murmured in sullen quiet. The primary elements of his nature dumbly understood the restrained power and answered to it. He stood for some minutes breathing in the moist salt air; then he turned and slowly retraced his steps. As he regained the road he stopped.

"I'll tell her to-morrow," he said aloud. "I won't wait another day."

But man proposes. Next day an urgent message called him to the boundary of his district, over the worst roads in the country, and night was falling before he reached home. The following day a fresh obstacle arose, and on the third another. A week passed, and he had not yet seen Nancy alone. To a more impetuous nature the delay would have been insupportable. In Prendergast it called up the dogged fatalism that lay deep in his character, and something of his old philosophy rose again reassuringly. There was time enough! Men like Astley might flit across the horizon of Rosscoe, disturbing its elements, but in due season they must inevitably flit away again and be forgotten. He stated this to himself on the seventh night after the Odells' dinner, as he sat in his lonely room by the light of his solitary lamp; and he reiterated it in the sunlight of the next morning, as he unpacked a chest of drugs brought by the post, and laid the contents on the window-sill of the dispensary, to await sorting. The philosophy was still in his mind as he sauntered across the cliff later in the day—his gun on his shoulder, his dog at his heels. His eyes were on the heather in front of him, his battered brown pipe was well aglow, when he paused in the midst of his meditation, arrested by a voice behind him.

"Hallo, Doctor! Where are you off to? Haven't seen you these hundred years."

It was the voice of Denis Odell; and, turning, Prendergast saw him emerge from one of the narrower tracks into the wide path that encircled the cliff. He looked brisk and healthy; there was a new spirit in his voice.

"Had any luck?" he asked. "We heard you banging away."

"Nothing to talk about." Prendergast spoke absently; he was speculating on the change in his companion. In all the

years of their acquaintance he had never known Odell to leave his room, much less his house, before afternoon.

The other saw his thought. "You're wondering," he said. "It's the touch of the world that's done it. Why did none of you here ever tell me I was vegetating? I'd have mouldered into the graveyard ten years before my time if Astley hadn't turned up to rejuvenate me. He's like one of your tonics, Prendergast—bitter to taste, but powerful in results." He laughed.

Prendergast shifted his gun uneasily. "You've been showing him the caves?" He nodded towards the track Odell had just ascended.

"Yes. The three of us have been exploring, and I've beaten the two of them in the climb back. Not bad for a dried-up recluse, eh?" He laughed again.

"No." Prendergast shifted his position and whistled to the dog. He knew that he himself could scarcely have outstripped Nancy in the ascending of a cliff had she cared to reach the summit first; and at the thought the first fully comprehended pang of jealousy shot over his senses. But instantly he shook it off. What had this stranger to do with Rosscoe, or life at Rosscoe? Nothing. He moved once more impatiently, and the dog stirred.

"Down, Rose! Quiet, old girl!" He looked uneasily towards the side-path. The thought of Nancy and the stranger alone on the brown rocky track filled him with ungovernable thoughts. Then suddenly his mood changed and lightened; his faith flowed back. "I hear them!" he exclaimed. "They're coming! This is a new experience for Mr. Astley." He laughed with a great reaction; there had been a terrible moment, but the moment was passed. He went forward quickly and looked over the cliff.

Nancy came first, her blue eyes alight, her hair blown about her temples. She walked over the boulders and loose earth of the track with the erect ease she would have shown on a level road; a pace or two behind came Astley, his pale face a shade or two paler than usual, his thin lips apart. The girl was the first to see Prendergast; she blushed quickly and then smiled.

"Doctor Prendergast!" she exclaimed. "Where in the world have you been hiding yourself all this time?" The words were slight, the tone hurried, but they were sufficient

to bring the blood in a slow tide to Prendergast's face. Unconsciously he raised his head, and met Astley's amused, sarcastic gaze.

"I have been working," he said.

Nancy gained the path and her companion followed. As he reached Prendergast's side he raised his eyebrows.

"Does anybody ever work in Ireland?" he asked innocently, disentangling his eyeglass string.

Odell laughed. "Look out, Astley!" he called. "I'd have broken your father's head for that thirty years ago. Come here, little girl," he added, "and give me an arm home. That climb was pretty stiff after all."

Astley and Prendergast drew back, and Nancy went forward, patting the dog's head as she passed. Odell took her arm affectionately, and they turned towards home.

The two men, left alone, stood silent and uncertain. A second passed, then another; at last Astley broke the pause.

"Where there's no alternative, Doctor," he said, "it's best to philosophize. Will you walk home with me?"

The delay that followed was acute in its suggestion. Prendergast kicked at a tuft of heather, then looked down in deep contemplation at his boot; Astley, his head inclined to the left, his eyes gleaming with sarcastic query, watched him with steady attention. The thought in each mind was visible—in the one, keen, unemotional interest; in the other, active distrust. The position was slightly ludicrous. Astley laughed.

"Come," he said, "we each have our point of view. I am superlatively irritating in your eyes; you are superlatively interesting in mine. Now, your profession is one of philanthropy. Will you walk back with me?"

The tone stung Prendergast, but the words amused him. His humor, lifeless for a week, roused itself, and he echoed the other's laugh.

"Just as you like," he acceded. "I suppose I am a bit churlish; we get like that from being alone."

Astley took the apology in wise silence, and they moved forward towards the bend round which Nancy and her father had disappeared. They walked slowly; it was a day to be lazily enjoyed. The cliff was splendid in its fading heather, the wide sweep of sea shimmered copper rather than gold;

everywhere lay the colors and the peace of an autumn afternoon. Prendergast eyed it placidly in the calm appreciation that time and custom bring; Astley, after one cursory glance, took no further notice of the scene, but fixed his whole concentrated interest on the man by his side. He looked as the entomologist looks when he pins a new and rare moth to his setting-board.

Looking back upon that walk, Prendergast could never remember precisely what they talked about. He had a certain after-impression that Astley had been even more brilliant and more individual than on the night of the dinner; that slowly and by reluctant degrees his own innate dislike and distrust of the man had thawed before his caustic charm, till he had been drawn to discuss his life, his work,—even his sentiments. That was his impression; but his impression, seen in the clearness of after-knowledge, is like a phantom light in presence of the sun—a poor, untraceable thing, without color or form. His first clear recollection dated from their pause at the point where the cliff track stopped and the road began. Far away in the distance the figures of Nancy and her father were discernible, heading steadily for home; above them the corn-fields rolled away—yellow and cropped and cleaned of their treasure; below was the village, the rocks, and the strand. The spot invited rest; Astley was the first to stop. Screwing in his eyeglass, he turned sharply on his companion and surveyed him deliberately with the old look that so roused antagonism.

"This visit to Ireland has meant a good deal to me," he said.

The tone he used was peculiar—so peculiar that Prendergast lifted his head. In an instant the partial softening of his feelings was arrested; he drew back into himself—once more watchful, suspicious, ill-at-ease.

"What do you mean?" he asked. The art of polite preamble was unknown to him.

For a moment Astley made no answer. He looked across the bay to where the second headland showed shadowy in the haze. Then he looked slowly and deliberately back at Prendergast.

"I mean that Miss Odell has promised to be my wife," he said.

It was many hours later that Prendergast unlocked the door of the dispensary, and, leaving it ajar, walked upstairs. He

walked slowly and heavily—the toes of his boots stumbling methodically against each uncarpeted step, the sleeve of his coat rubbing against the whitewashed wall. Entering the bare consulting-room, he paused: his gun hung from his hand; the dog, a yard behind him, stood attentive and surprised. For several seconds he stayed immovable, then, stirred by some untraceable thought, he lifted the gun, looked at it, and laid it aside. Taking off his cap, he passed his hand slowly and perplexedly across his hair.

How he had parted with Astley, what he had said, how he had borne himself, belonged to some vague, long-past time. He had a shadowy memory of a cold concise voice, and of cold, amused, intensely inquisitive eyes. Then came a knowledge of escape and a recollection of walking—walking on and on, without sense of distance or destination, in a fruitless attempt to outstrip himself. With the remembrance of his walk he looked quickly down at his boots caked with red mud; then with the dazed, vacant look still on his face he crossed the room to the window overlooking the street.

On the window-sill stood the packing-case that the post had brought, the strewn shavings, the phials and boxes of varying size. He looked at them stolidly, with difficulty connecting them with himself. Each one had been given its place that morning by a man in the strong confidence of life, each was glanced over now by a man who had lost the very bearings of existence. Once more he passed his hand heavily over his hair.

To emphasize his feelings in that hour would be impossible—he had none to emphasize. Neither rage nor loss nor desolation held any part in his comprehension. He was merely stunned.

For well over ten minutes he kept the same position—his hands hanging by his sides, his eyes fastened unseeingly on the litter before him; then swiftly, by one of those tiny incidents that change events, he was brought back to movement. The dog, lying under the table, stirred in its sleep, stretched its paws shiveringly, and yelped. The sound, so familiar and so commonplace, roused him.

“Wake up, Rose!” he said unconsciously. “Wake up, old girl!”

The sound of his voice in the still room was hollow; the dog sprang up, twisted its body, yawned, and came forward, wag-

ing its tail. A second later it thrust its nose amongst the *débris* of the window-sill, sending one small bottle rolling to the ground.

Prendergast stooped and recovered it. It was a narrow bottle, neatly packed with fine white grains, and bearing a significant label. As he drew himself upright again he held it to the light, his face grimly relaxed.

"One pinch of this, Rose," he said, "and——" But he didn't finish. With a sound half fierce, half ironical, he broke off sharply, and, holding the bottle between his fingers, walked the length of the room. Three times he paced from end to end, then pausing, he laid it aside in his ordinary drug cupboard, and continued his promenade with empty hands.

He walked persistently for three minutes, as a prisoner might tramp a jail-yard; then once more he paused, surprised into quiet by a fresh sound—the sound of steps on the carpetless stairs outside. With a first impulse he turned to annihilate the intruder, then something in the steps themselves—something in the soft, considered mounting, held him mute. The dog walked to the door and growled. The growl steadied him.

"Down, Rose!" he said roughly, and moving past the animal he threw the door wide.

In the passage the pale face of Astley accosted him sharply through the dust. He drew back, and his visitor made a step forward; the light of question still flickered in his eyes.

"I rather thought of consulting you professionally," he began, "and finding the door open I came up. Have I transgressed?" He laughed, but his cold voice was more alert than usual, his words more clipped.

In silence Prendergast drew back into the room.

The other still halted on the threshold. "Have I transgressed?" he asked again.

"You may come in." Prendergast forced the monosyllables. At the first sound of the chilling voice his whole mental mechanism had undergone a change. As a cold douche sends the blood tingling, the first word uttered by Astley had slashed his lethargy into bits. All the silent antipathy that existed from the first, all the new, intolerable sense of wrong that lay dormant in his mind, flooded up and met. At school he had earned the reputation of being hard to rouse; as he stood now by the deal table, conscious in every pore of Astley's presence,

he remembered by a strange linking of ideas one memorable day in that same school-life on which he had, single-handed, fought and conquered three boys of his own size. At the recollection he crossed the room rapidly and stood once more by the window, looking down into the deserted street.

Silently Astley moved forward, and in his turn also paused by the table. "The fact is," he began, "my nerves gave me a bad time this morning, and have left the legacy of a splitting head. It struck me to come to you for relief——" As he spoke he leant forward; the light from the small windows was growing momentarily duller. A September evening falls rapidly once the sun has dropped.

"A headache?" Prendergast said the word dully; he was aware, in a strange, uncertain way, of a tightness—a sense of congestion in his own brain. "A headache?" he said again.

"Yes; a headache."

The words reached him, but their meaning left him untouched. Without definite object he walked back into the room, and, passing Astley, paused once more by the cupboard in the wall. His hand strayed to the door-hinge and fumbled there; the motion was unconscious, but it raised a new query in his visitor's attentive eyes.

He left his place by the table and drew closer to Prendergast by two steps.

"Make me a dose," he urged; "you have the materials under your hand." His voice was at all times distinct; when he chose he could make it vibrate like a bell. As he spoke now he used all his power, and in direct and violent response a change passed over Prendergast. He lifted his head, straightened his shoulders, and once more passed his hand across his hair. By some inexplicable force the blood that had seemed massed in his brain rushed darkly over his face—roaring in his ears, dancing before his eyes. He had been moving, living, talking in a dream; now abruptly he was awake, conscious of himself and of his loss, with a consciousness that ran direct, without offshoot or divergence, into one channel—the channel of violent, jealous hate. In that instant of enlightenment, every impulse and every feeling concentrated to a point, he understood everything from the first moment his eyes had rested on Astley to the present hour; each item, each incident, each idea turned on the same pivot—jealousy. Jealousy! On the spur of the thought he half

turned, his hand clenched; then, with a motive altogether novel, he paused on his impulse, and slowly, quite slowly, turned back, facing the cupboard once again. Astley's words seemed to hop in material form between the bottles, to stare at him from the shelves. "Make me a dose; you have the materials under your hand!" Harshly, smoothly, suggestively—in every varying note they were shouted and whispered in his mind.

"What do you mostly take?" he asked. The words came steadily enough, but it didn't seem that the voice that spoke them belonged to him.

Astley came forward another step. "Oh, anything—anti-pyrim or the other stuff—anything you like——" He, too, seemed slightly and unaccountably perturbed; but the perturbation escaped Prendergast. Such a man in such a moment is oblivious of everything but his own dominant thought.

His face had a gray pallor, his hand fumbled continuously with the hinge. "Heart sound?" he asked, without turning round.

For an instant Astley made no reply, then he laughed with deliberate, sarcastic point. "My dear doctor, what a question to a man in my position! Surely Miss Odell is the authority there." The words were light, but they were meant to cut, and they fulfilled their mission. Prendergast made no remark. For a complete minute he remained absolutely motionless, absolutely mute; then picking up a wine-glass he carried it across the room, half filled it with water, and returned to the cupboard and his former place. His face still had a leaden tinge, his eyes were fixed; without a glance at Astley he leant forward—his wide shoulders robbing the cupboard of light. With jerking fingers he uncorked a bottle, measured a pinch of white powder and spilt it into the glass; then, having added two other ingredients, he turned round. His face was expressionless and without movement, save for the throbbing of a nerve at the corner of his mouth—a curious vehicle of feeling that answered to no control. Without a word he held the glass at arm's-length.

The light in the room was failing. Astley, with slightly nervous haste and head inquisitively thrust forward, moved to his side.

"This is the dose?" he asked, his hand half extended, his eyes bright with question and surmise.

Prendergast saw each detail, and his innate physical loathing of the man rose overwhelmingly. "Yes; this is the dose," he said in a dull voice, and thrusting the glass into Astley's hand, he walked to the window and stood looking out.

All men have their dark—their terrible hour—to be lived through, struggled through, crawled through, as the case may be. How long Prendergast stood by the window and stared through the dusty panes matters not at all; whether a moment or a lifetime, the issues were the same. He stood while the savage tide of his jealousy leaped up in fire and fell back to water—running in trickling sweat down his forehead from his hair. Then at last he turned. All life seemed gone from his face, and he stooped like one who has passed through great physical exertion, but the strained look had left his eyes. Whatever his fight had been, it was fought through.

The room seemed very dim as he turned, but the glint of the glass as his patient raised it slowly caught his eye as lightning might have done. He sprang forward; the dog made a frightened sound—half bark, half cry; Astley stepped backward, overturning a chair. For a bare instant all was confusion; then Prendergast drew back against the wall and wiped his face. The dog had run to him and was fawning on his feet; Astley, with a colorless face and a smile on his thin lips, was twisting and re-twisting his eyeglass string; between them on the ground lay the shattered fragments of the wine-glass, its spilt contents running in a thin stream across the boards.

That night Prendergast did not go home; but when, worn and exhausted, he let himself into his house next morning at six o'clock, the first object that met his glance was a propped-up letter on the hall-table. It was a thick letter in a square envelope, addressed in an unfamiliar hand.

He had entered the house with inert movements. With the same inertness he picked up the envelope and tore it apart. It bore the date of seven o'clock on the previous evening—exactly half an hour after the moment at which he had watched Astley pass down the dispensary stairs. He scanned the first lines dully; then a change passed over his face—the dark tide of blood that suffused his skin in emotion swept over it, he turned with unsteady fingers to the signature, then returned

to the first page and read the letter to the end. It was carefully and concisely worded—the writing distinct and small.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR," it began, "I am your debtor under two heads—I owe you my apologies and my thanks. I came to your village with a purpose and a theory; by your unconscious help I leave it to-morrow with the first fulfilled and the second verified. In short I came here to find you the quite lethargic hero of a very promising comedy, and, having a turn for human theatricals, I conceived the idea of playing scene-shifter and audience in one—of providing a climax and watching the lethargic hero live through it. From your point of view the act was unwarrantable; but, as I once explained to you, a point of view is a very prejudiced affair at best, and when all is reckoned up no solid harm has been achieved. I have gained an insight into the Celtic nature by a means no more genuine than your dose of—shall we say antipyrin? And for the rest, Miss Odell is entirely charming; but such pleasant pastimes as love and marriage lie in more worthy—or should it be more suitable?—hands than mine.—Yours faithfully,

JAMES ASTLEY."

Prendergast read the letter to the end, word by word; then slowly, dazedly, unbelievably, he turned back to the beginning and read it through again.





HE Proving of Hamp Paddleford: A Story of the Southwest, by Frank H. Sweet*



"Tain't no use to pester me any more, Hamp," she broke in suddenly; "you ain't fitten to marry."

"But why ain't I fitten?" he pleaded. "I can lick any man round here, an' you said yourself only yes'day that I was harnsome an' mighty good natured, an'—"

"An' barefoot," she finished scornfully. "Sakes alive, Hamp Paddleford, ye ain't s'posin' I'd marry a man who's got nothin' in this wide world but a runt pig his pap was too lazy to care for. I ain't no onary Coon Flat girl," and she drew herself up to her full height, with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes. "'Tain't cause I'm not usen to it," with a proud, comprehensive sweep of her hand toward the earth floor of the cabin. "My pap brought mam here, an' she's been here ever since, with not so much as a new shovelful of mud put on the chimbly that was only finished half way up.

No, it's all been Coon Flat so fur, but 'tain't goin' into no marryin'. My man's got to have a cabin with a floor to it, an' a cow an' hens, an' shoes for meetin' days—"

"I'll get all of 'em, Posey, every cussed one," he urged. "You know—"

"Yes, I know; mam says pap was goin' to make her a plank floor, but he never did. An' he was big an' strong an' harnsome, like you. It's jest the Coon Flat way. Now there's Tyke—"

His humility vanished instantly.

"Doggone Tyke!" he snapped. "He's got a cabin with a floor, I know; an' he's a cow an' hens, an' is dickerin' for a mule; but he ain't got nerve to fight a 'possum. An' he's bow-legged an' squints an' ain't more'n five feet high. If a

*Written for Short Stories.

gal like you is willin' to stand up 'longside of Tyke, then I ain't in the hunt."

She looked at him placidly.

"I ain't sayin' but you're the better favored, Hamp; an' I do like you, an' I ain't 'shamed to tell so," she commented; "but you're twenty-five years old, an' ain't never owned a pair of shoes for meetin' yet. Tyke was here yes'day an' 'lowed to sheer all he'd got, an' he's a still in the mountain that'll bring a-plenty right along."

"An' what did you say?" sullenly.

Posey laughed a little, then her face grew sober.

"Wall, I run him from the cabin, fust off," she confessed; "but he wouldn't take that answer, an' sneaked back to the door an' begged me to think it over. He said he'd come ag'in to-morrer." She was silent for a few moments, then threw her head back defiantly, looking squarely into his eyes. "An' I have thunk it over, Hamp Paddleford, an' made up my mind for good an' all that I won't end my days on no mud floor. That's all the answer I've got."

She looked superb as she stood there in the doorway, and Hamp caught his breath in a half-sob of longing and despair; then he turned and slouched down the path.

Opposite his own cabin he paused hesitatingly. His mother was seated in the doorway with pipe in mouth, ready for a talk. She had seen him with Posey. So he slouched on to the next cabin, to where his particular friend lay sprawled at full length upon the leaves.

"Done seen ye," the friend drawled significantly; "went up the path full swing, an' come back with head droopin'. Hope the brook ain't runnin' over no rocks nor nothin'."

Hamp grunted and threw himself upon the leaves.

"That onary Tyke was hangin' 'round thar right smart yes'day," the friend continued, reflectively. "Course they's nothin' to it; but gals—"

"He's lottin' to marry her, Sam," Hamp said listlessly.

"What!" and Sam raised himself to an elbow and looked at his friend queerly. "Tyke carryin' off your gal, an' you lyin' here a-dreamin'. Why don't ye shoot him?"

"What' the use," mournfully. "'Twould only put me further away from Posey. You don't understan' her, Sam. She'd say I was too big to jump on a little, sawed-off thing like Tyke—an' she'd be right. Not but what I'd like to

shoot him though," vehemently, "jest like I would a skunk or snake. It's all he's fit for, to be shot. But I can't resk hard feelin's with Posey."

Sam dropped back disgustedly.

"Gals are cert'ny queer," he grumbled. "I'm glad I've never got in with none of 'em. The idee of a harnsome critter like Posey sidlin' up to Tyke, when a man like you was makin' eyes at her."

"Oh, 't ain't the man, Sam. Posey likes me well 'nough; but I ain't no plank floor, nor even a cabin; an' Tyke has both, an' other things. I've never thought much about floors bein' needed to prance 'round on; but when Posey spoke like they was, I knew she was right. If Posey 'd say everybody ought to wear coats even when 't was hot, like preachers do, an' that we should have shoes for every day in the week an' I was lookin' in them eyes of hers when she said it, I'd know she was right. Posey ain't like no other Coon Flat girl that ever growed. Why, Sam," earnestly, "if one of them little birds should drop twenty-five whole dollars right down here on the leaves, I'd be willin' to put every single one of 'em into a plank floor for Posey to walk on."

Sam gave a long, low whistle, and dropping his head back upon his hands gazed thoughtfully at the bits of blue through the interstices of foliage. Ten, fifteen minutes; then he suddenly returned to his position on one elbow.

"You must get Posey the floor, Hamp," he declared.

Hamp merely grunted something about getting his granny.

"But you must," Sam insisted, rising to his feet in his earnestness.

"Why, man, you're the one who ought to be shot, not Tyke. I ain't no gal man, but if I was an' had one like Posey, no cussed little floor could come atween us. She should have floors till she couldn't rest, if I had to bark my knuckles an' keep my gun barrel red hot to git 'em."

"Tyke's comin' to-morrer," Hamp muttered, rising dejectedly to his feet. "Right to-morrer; an' from the way Posey spoke, there ain't to be no if an' mebbysin'. She'll snap 'yes' or 'no' right out, an' she'll stick to what she says. She won't do no monkeyin'. The only way I can see is to shoot him, an' that would make things wuss. A floored cabin's boun' to cost a plum heap."

"Yes," agreed Sam, "'boun' to. But I've been piecin' the thing out. You know that big hoss farm down in the valley?"

"Hinckle's—yes. But he's done sold out."

"I know, to a whole passle of folks from the North—more'n a hundred famblies some say. They're startin' a village an' a whole lot of truck farms to grow stuff for city sellin', an' the hoss farm is bein' cut up an' divided. But what I've been piecin' out is this: they don't know nothin' 'bout hosses an' are tryin' to sell 'em off, an' the animals are runnin' wild all over the place. Hinckle an' his men have gone away, an' the new folks don't know you an' me from Adam. We'll slip down to-night, an' while you're makin' up to 'em with that smooth way of talkin' you've got, I'll snoop in among the scattered hosses an' run a couple into the bushes. Then you'll jine me, an' we'll git 'em over t'other side the mountain by mornin', to that man Shanks. He'll buy anything at half what it's wuth, an' not ask a question. To-morrer he'll slip 'em over the line into another State, an' that'll be an end of the matter, only that you an' me will have forty or fifty dollars apiece."

"Bill Todd got caught up with when he tried to run a hoss from Hinckle's last year," said Hamp, thoughtfully. "He's in jail yet."

"That's dif'runt," contemptuously. "Hinckle had a pair of eyes in every fence post on his place; an' besides, you know Bill Todd. A cow could catch up with him. Will you go?"

"Will I go?" Hamp turned suddenly to him with face transfigured; he was another man—his form dilated, his eyes flashing. "Will I go?" he repeated. "Man, I'd go if there was two pair of eyes in every post, an' each pair sightin' me across a gun-barrel. Ain't Tyke comin' for an answer to-morrer? I'd give up 'cause I couldn't see no way; if I could an' 'twas to pull down the moon, I'd kick my legs an' arms off a tryin'. You ain't looked in Posey's eyes an' seen what I have. Come."

Sam grinned derisively.

"Been hangin' round Posey 'bout three years, nigh's I can rec'lect," he commented, "an' ain't never had a spurt like this afore, not even a spurt big 'nough to steer ye into a pair of shoes for meetin' days. Reckon Tyke's crossin' the trail has sort of stirred ye up. But come on. They's no sort of

hurry, for 'tain't noon yet; but I don't reckon ye'd be satisfied to wait now ye've struck a scent."

It was ten miles to the new settlement in the valley; but their long legs made it in a little less than two hours. As they approached the cluster of dwellings which were taking the place of the big barn and stock yards, they noticed what seemed an unusual gathering for even the building of a village. Nor did they hear the sounds of saws and hammers. Instead, nondescript wagons were standing about, with horses hitched to wheels or tailboards; other horses were fastened to the fences, with saddles on, and men were walking about or gathered in groups in earnest discussion. Hamp and Sam paused irresolutely and looked at each other; then Sam nodded, his face clearing.

"'Lecton, of course," he said. "I heered they was goin' to call the neighborhood together to talk over a school house an' a courthouse, an' to 'lect town officers an' a sheriff, but didn't know when. This is it. Wall," reflectively, "I don't reckon it'll make any difference to us. Only 'stead of skulkin' off one side I'll go straight on with you into the crowd. Two more won't make no jar. We'll sidle round an' make friends till 'bout dark, then I'll slip a couple of hosses into the bushes an' tie 'em. Folks won't notice with so much goin' on, an' you makin' yourself conspic'ous all the time. Arter a while I'll come strollin' back unconcerned like an' you an' me'll talk some with everybody and then prance off straight opposite, circling round to the hosses arter dark. That'll prove an allerbi in case one's needed. But look yonder."

Hamp turned,. A big negro was heading directly toward them, running at full speed. But as he drew near and saw them, he suddenly swerved, sprang over a fence, and sped across a field toward the nearest wood. With a "Somethin's done broke," Hamp cleared the fence at a bound and sped after him. The negro was a large man and a good runner, but Hamp was larger and swifter. At the end of a hundred yards' dash his hand dropped heavily upon the negro's shoulder, swung him round, and began to drag him back to the group of men who had by this time joined Sam.

"Ding me if that wa'n't the best capture I ever saw," called one of them delightedly, as Hamp approached with his prisoner. A clean jump an' run, an' a clutch like a steel trap.

That's the way folks ought to be took. Come to 'lection, I s'pose?"

"Why, yes, sort of," Hamp acquiesced, "me an' my friend Sam 'lowed we'd step round an' git 'quainted a little."

"That's right! That's right!" heartily. "We want everybody round to jine in with us an' get law an' conveniences started. We need 'em bad. This black feller's been makin' chicken business pretty brisk lately, but we didn't have any lawful place to shet him up. I've kept him tied in my barn three days, waitin' for 'lection to provide suitable officers an' places. Live near by?"

"'Bout ten miles."

"Wall, that's pretty close in a neighborhood like this; but I hope you'll come in closer still. It's a mighty good thing to have a neighbor who can capture criminals in such an easy, off-hand way. Folks'll all be glad to know you. See," smiling and nodding significantly toward a group that was hurrying toward them, "there comes a passle now. S'pose you tell me your name so I can do the talkin'."

Hamp glanced sideways at Sam; but Sam was looking straight ahead and did not appear to see him. Still, in spite of the gravity of the face, he was conscious of a slow, convulsive wink, apparently directed at a turkey buzzard floating in the distance.

"I'm Hamp, for short," he said, answering both the man and the wink; "Hamp Paddleford, altogether. My friend is Sam Pollock. An' we'll be glad to jine in your 'lectin' an' other business. We come down jest to be neighborly."

"Good! good for you!" cried the man, slapping Hamp between the shoulders. "You're the right sort. My name's Thompson—Bill Thompson,—an' that's my house right ahead, the big one. Now for the introducin'."

During the next half-hour Hamp passed from one group to another, soon establishing himself as an open-hearted, good-natured fellow who was ready to make friends. And his character was saved from undue gentleness by the story of the negro's capture, which followed him everywhere.

At length a man stood up in a wagon body and began to talk, and the scattered groups closed in about him, Hamp and Sam in the very front. And to all appearance there were none more interested than they in the fate of the school house and courthouse and jail, and in the selection of suitable com-

mittees and town officials. But though their hands and voices were always emphatic and conspicuous, they were used in a judicious seconding of the popular sentiment. In time the office of sheriff was reached, and as had been the case with the other offices, it was to be decided upon by the popular and easy method of showing hands. Those of Hamp and Sam had been in the air most of the time; but now when the name of Bill Thompson was called, they rose a little quicker and their voices went a little higher. But as the noise began to subside, Bill Thompson himself was heard speaking.

"Sorry, boys," he said; "but I've got to decline. You know how I'm fixed. Got more work than any two men ought to do; an' you know a sheriff needstime of his own. Get somebody less busy."

There was a few moments of consultation, then some one called "Jake Potter!"

"No, no, boys," came a hoarse voice from somewhere on the other side; "I'm like Bill Thompson, got too much work. Try ag'in."

"Hamp Paddleford!" cried Bill Thompson suddenly. "He's the man we want. Why didn't we think of him before? He caught the negro, and he's big enough an' quick enough to catch anything. Hamp Paddleford's the man."

"Hamp Paddleford!" "Hamp Paddleford!" "He's the man we want!" yelled the crowd, "Hooray!"

Hamp's hand had gone up instinctively at the first sign of a name being called. Now it dropped abruptly; and he stood there with eyes and mouth wide open, amazed, dazed.

"What's it mean, Sam?" he whispered hoarsely, "Are they foolin'?"

"Shet up, you fool!" Sam snapped. "Don't give yourself away now. No, they ain't foolin'; though you needn't hold up a hand to vote for yourself. Great snakes!" with a low, hilarious chuckle which was wholly lost in the yelling of the voters; "it beats anything I ever heered of. We'll take a dozen hosses 'stead of jest two. You're to be the sheriff who'll go off in search of yourself. Ho! ho! Bet a dollar you don't catch yourself, Hamp."

But Hamp did not notice, did not even hear. His eyes were still blinking at the crowd, his mouth was still open. He heard vaguely, "I nominate Hamp Paddleford to be sheriff," and a little later, "Hamp Paddleford is voted sheriff, to go in

office to-day!" Then he felt Bill Thompson's hand upon his shoulder, and heard his big, bluff voice saying:

"Congratulate you, Paddleford. It's a good job for a man who ain't drove with work—you ain't drove, are you?" anxiously.

"N—no, not very," Hamp answered mechanically.

"Then it's all right," in a relieved voice. "The job'll turn you in seven or eight hundred dollars, mebbe a thousand. And it would be better if you could come an' live in our village. It would be handier. Married?"

"No."

"Wants to be, though," Sam grinned.

"Good. Bring her right down—to-morrer if you can. I know a nice little cottage all furnished that can be got. Come to my house first an' let me help you get started."

"But I don't," Hamp began, when Sam nudged him sharply.

When Thompson left he drew Hamp aside. "Look here, man," he expostulated; "don't you go to hintin' nothin' away. It's the biggest plum that ever fell into two men's mouths, an' we can make our cussed fortunes if we only do things on the quiet."

But a new expression had been coming into Hamp's eyes.

"You 'low it's all straight an' sure," he asked slowly; "that I'm to be the sheriff for good an' all?"

"Course."

Hamp drew a long deep, wondering breath, a breath which reached down to some germ of honesty and ambition that lay beyond the influence of Coon Flat.

"Then I reckon you'd better give up that hoss stealin' idee," he advised; "'cause if you don't I'll be obleeged to 'rest you." Sam stared at him.

"'Rest *me*?" he demanded.

"Yes; ain't I sheriff?"

"But you're in it with me, man."

Hamp shook his head gravely.

"Not any more, that way," he answered. "A sheriff has to be plumb-square, an' to look sharp for folks who ain't. Don't let's have any fallin's out, Sam, you an' me; we're too good friends. But there's to be no more buttin' agin' the law. Mebbe I can git you a job with me as dep'ty or somethin'. Now let's go back to Posey."



THE First and The Second Isabella: The History of a Trans- formation, by Evelyn Sharp*



ISABELLA THE FIRST was not, to the ordinary observer at least, prepossessing in appearance. She was lanky without being exactly tall, and gave one the impression of having grown up in a great hurry and taken her dress with her; and when I first saw her sitting at the bottom of her class, the most noticeable thing about her was the length of black stocking that she managed most ingeniously to curl round each of the front legs of her chair. She had the kind of hair that suggests the rough-haired terrier; it was full of short ends, and neither curled nor lay smooth, but stood straight out from her head in little tufts, and so earned for its owner her school nick name of "Penwiper." But she had the terrier's eyes as well—brown, wistful, mischievous and kind all at once; and in spite of the youthful redness of her hands and her general inkiness—Isabella always contrived, somehow, to look inky ten minutes after her arrival in class—and in spite of all the other marks she bore of the tiresome, barbaric age of fifteen, it was possible to endure much from her for the sake of those eyes.

For more reasons than one, Isabella made an illuminating spot in my life, at the time that I happened to meet her. She was the most ignorant member of the first class I ever taught; and most teachers, I believe, have a friendly feeling for the ignorant members of their first class. I was particularly grateful to Isabella for being ignorant, for, as luck would have it, the school that had rashly accepted my untried services insisted on my beginning with a course of arithmetic lessons.

*From Temple Bar.

I protested that arithmetic was my weakest point, and that I had repeatedly been bottom of my own school in arithmetic, while carrying off prizes for German, botany, and a variety of ornamental subjects. But my principal, who was rather an unusual sort of person, said that she never wanted people to teach subjects that were not their weakest points. So the end of it was that I had to teach Isabella's class the subject that was mine.

The new girl, no doubt, feels pretty bad at times, but it might console her to know that the new teacher feels just like it, only more so. And when I think of the rows of unsympathetic elder girls who rose to their feet as I came into the classroom, all of them, I felt sure, filled with accurate and exhaustive knowledge of what I was going to teach them, I can only say that I never want to feel it again.

"Have you done areas, carpets and wall papers, and so on?" I asked, as I turned over the leaves of the arithmetic book casually, and lighted, as if by accident, upon the page I had studied far into the night before.

Of course, one girl said in a superior tone that she had, long ago. Every teacher knows that one girl in the class has always done everything. But I did not mean to have sat up half the night for nothing.

"Then it will not hurt you to do them again," I promptly told the superior one, who smiled round at the others to show what an easy time she was going to have.

I braved the critical gaze of the front row of experts, and began to make conversation by way of putting off the evil moment.

"It is highly important that you should know how to do areas," I continued in an impressive tone. "Every woman should know how to do areas. Think how useful it will be when you're married and have houses of your own, to be able to calculate how much carpet you will want for your floors.

Here the class laid down its pencil and looked interested. Evidently it did not anticipate arithmetic for the moment; and their teacher being just as anxious as they were to fill up the hour before her with anything in the world but arithmetic, enlarged still further on the advantages of learning to do areas, carefully concealing the fact that bursts upon us all sooner or later that they make no allowance whatever for the carpet having a pattern.

A yawn from Isabella, and the slow uncurling of one of the long black legs, reminded me sadly that arithmetic would in the end be expected of me, and I ran my finger down the page of sums with a horrible sensation of incapacity, as I saw by the clock that I had filled up exactly four minutes of the time, and that the class still had fifty-six in which to find me out.

"Let me see," I murmured, as if I had not settled at one o'clock in the morning on the sums I was going to give them," "I think we will begin with this one—no, this one!" And I set the result of my midnight labors on the blackboard.

The rapidity with which that class did sums which had taken me hours to prepare, was simply heartless. The superior girl helped me a little by drawing pictures in her note-book while I gave my explanation, so that, when she came to do her sum and found, of course, that she had forgotten the way, I had a good excuse for explaining it all over again. And after that, just as I was again facing the awful possibility of having to give them a sum that I had not prepared beforehand, Isabella came to my aid.

"I can't think what's happened to the stupid thing," she remarked, uncurling the other leg, so that they now both stuck out straight in front of her; "I've got yards and yards more carpet in my answer than anybody else has!"

This, I felt certain, was going to be the moment when my class would find me out. I had mastered my own difficulties overnight, but I had not allowed for private and particular difficulties on the part of a mere pupil. So I walked down, quaking, to the bottom of my class, tripped over Isabella's legs and arrived at her ink-besmeared sum.

I could almost have hugged her when I saw what she had done. It was so delightful of her to make the same old familiar mistake that I had made myself, time after time, in my own school days. I am not even quite sure that in the watches of the night before I had not made it over again. Anyhow, there it was, staring at me from a page of misshapen figures that might have been torn from my own note-book just five years earlier. The mere sight of it was enough to put me back suddenly in Isabella's place at the bottom of the class—long legs, inky fingers and all.

"You see you have multiplied the walls and the ceiling together, as well as the floor," I pointed out to her. "You

couldn't carpet the walls and the ceiling, if you come to think of it, now could you?"

"I suppose you couldn't," admitted Isabella, though she was evidently not prepared for the idea that arithmetic carpet could possibly have any characteristics of ordinary domestic carpet.

"Never mind, we'll soon put it right," I went on encouragingly; "it's the mistake I always used to make myself."

The terrier's eyes swept swiftly round upon me, filled with amazement; then they softened, all at once, into friendliness.

"Did you really?" she asked, in an interested tone. "Did you ever get them wrong?"

I nodded as I worked my way through the masses of figures her ridiculous mistake had accumulated; and I wondered how I should have felt five years ago if it had ever occurred to me that my arithmetic mistress was a human person like everyone else.

Isabella continued to stare at me with interest. "Then—then—were you really as stupid as me?" she pursued.

"Every bit as stupid," I confessed.

Isabella shot out her legs an inch or two further in the excitement of the moment; and the girl in front of her pulled forward her chair with the dismal scrape characteristic of the schoolgirl.

"And did you hate it?" was Isabella's next question.

"Yes," I said heartily, as I jotted down a last correction over her shoulder.

Isabella drew a long breath and nodded until all her front bits of hair fell over her eyes.

"And you're so splendid now!" she exclaimed.

She apologized absently when I tripped over her legs again, then drew them back slowly and sat for the rest of the lesson in a curious attitude, with one foot doubled up under her, and the other crooked round the leg of her neighbor's desk. But I forgave her these and all her other eccentricities for the sake of the service her stupidity had done me. Thanks to Isabella the First, my arithmetic class never found me out.

"You see what happens when people teach subjects that are their weak points," said the Principal at the end of the term, when she read my report of Isabella.

I had added another five years to my age when I met Isabella the Second. She was sitting on the drawing-room

floor, playing with her baby, as the maid announced me; and I had a moment in which to study her before she turned round.

I do not quite know what I had expected to see. I knew she had left school three years ago, that she had married almost immediately, and had been living abroad ever since. And of course I knew that the Isabella of twenty, who was a wife and a mother, would not exactly resemble the Isabella of fifteen who had sat at the bottom of my arithmetic class. For all that, the picture in my mind as I followed the maid upstairs had been that of a lanky schoolgirl with prominent hands and feet, a ragged head of hair, and ink everywhere. So the second Isabella was rather a shock to me as I saw her kneeling on the hearthrug, crooning softly to the little bundle of white frills that lay on its back in front of her.

But when she jumped up and turned round, I saw that the same brown eyes were there, with the same friendly, doggy look in them. They were all I could recognize about her, for the terrier's hair had grown to the right length at last, and curled and waved around her forehead just like everyone else's, while the hand she held out to me was white and shapely, as innocent of ink as of knuckles.

And the long black legs had become a Paris tea-gown.

It was the first time I had seen a pupil grow up, and I wondered if it was always done like that.

"How charming of you to come! Do sit down," said Isabella, in the manner of a hostess of thirty. "Let me see, do you take sugar? I really forget."

It was so deliciously overdone that I could not feel hurt. Of course, Isabella had a husband and baby; and Isabella's world just then held no place for anybody who had neither. I fell into the situation with glee, and prepared to enjoy it thoroughly.

"Two lumps, please, and the milk in first," I answered gravely, wondering if these familiar details, that Isabella had prided herself on remembering five years ago, would restore us to our former footing. Of course, they did nothing of the sort.

"Richard takes three," was the perfectly uncalled for observation that my words produced; and I reminded myself hastily that the cup she handed me was not thick and white with a pink rim round it, and that nothing could make the cucumber sandwiches into thick schoolroom slices of bread and butter. These belonged to the period of ink and knuckles.

On her way back to the tea-table Isabella casually picked up the bundle of white frills. Her attempt to look as though it were quite the ordinary thing for bundles of white frills to be lying about on people's floors, was also overdone; and I again hastened to meet her halfway. After all, I was beginning to find the same method could be applied both to the first and the second Isabella—whether it was a sum or a baby did not much matter.

"Oh, is that a baby?" I asked, as if I had not seen it before.

"Yes," answered Isabella, burying her face in the midst of the white frills. "It's mine," she added as an afterthought.

"I thought it might be yours. That's why I asked," I said, humbly. "May I look at her?" I added, putting down my cup.

"It's a boy," corrected Isabella with condescension. I again recognized our changed positions. However, she placed the bundle gingerly in my arms and stood a little way off, as if she expected something to happen. "Shall I show you how to hold it?" she added anxiously, the next minute.

She readjusted the baby on my arm and gave it a professional pat, which upset it dreadfully; and the tiny face in the midst of the frills became riddled at once with the cares and the griefs of a lifetime.

"It is surprising how few people know the way to hold a baby," remarked Isabella, when the white frills had been borne off by a magnificent nurse, and we could once more hear ourselves speak. "Of course, it makes a difference if you haven't got one yourself," she added graciously.

"Having one certainly makes a difference," I admitted, looking at the solemn young person behind the tea-tray.

"Do you like Eton or Harrow best?" was Isabella's next question with startling suddenness.

I jumped, and said "Eton" at random, because it came first. It would not have mattered though, if I had said "Timbuctoo," for Isabella's thoughts were by this time twenty years ahead.

"And after that Christ Church," she went on dreamily. "Richard was at Christ Church," she added as if that explained everything.

A sense of humor may do much; but mine would not let me endure another moment of this sort of thing, so I made a diversion by asking her hastily if she had been to the pantomime yet.

Isabella the First had adored pantomimes. Isabella the Second looked simply hurt at such a suggestion.

"I could not possibly leave baby to go anywhere," she explained. "I don't think much of a mother who does not give up everything for her child."

It was too much. The picture of the first Isabella rose irresistibly in my mind, and could not be effaced even by the strenuous young woman who sat in all her married splendor and patronized me. After all, there were still five years between us; and five years had made a lot of difference in the days when the inky occupant of the bottom place in my class could not do her sums.

Isabella did not quite know what to make of a visitor who suddenly collapsed into a fit of laughter. But the child had not lost her instinct with all her other doggy qualities; and she soon broke into a shamefaced laugh herself.

"It's all very well," she protested, "but you haven't got a baby, have you?"

"No, my dear little girl, I have no baby and no Richard, and nothing—nothing but a dull and stuffy knowledge of how much carpet to order, when you want to cover your walls and your ceiling and your floor with it!" I cried maliciously.

Swiftly there leapt into her eyes a twinkle of mischief, and to my joy I saw that Isabella the First had come back into the room.

"You don't even know that," she chuckled. "Those sums of yours never allowed for the pattern!"

"Ah," I sighed, "so you have discovered that too? Then, after all, it is the most ignorant pupil in my class who has found me out."

"What do you mean?" asked Isabella.

I had a sudden inspiration to pay back the debt of gratitude I had owed her for five years.

"There was once a teacher," I told her, "a teacher who was horribly afraid of her pupils, and horribly ignorant of the subject she had to teach—or at least she thought she was. She wasn't really, you know; and she found out that she wasn't through the bottom girl in the class."

"And what was the bottom girl in the class like?" asked Isabella, who had altogether ceased to be strenuous, and was

sitting on the end of the sofa near me, swinging her legs to and fro just as if they were not covered with a Paris tea-gown.

"She was full of corners," I answered, "and her face was full of features, and her hair was full of ends. Her legs were always in the way, and she made you feel inky just to look at her. But her heart was in the right place—if her collar wasn't; and she taught that teacher how to teach. So the teacher made up her mind that she would thank her for it some day, if she ever got the chance."

"And what was the name of the teacher?" asked my hostess demurely.

I shrugged my shoulders. "That doesn't matter," I said.

"Then what was the name of the bottom girl in the class?" pursued my hostess with a whimsical laugh.

I looked her squarely in the face.

"Isabella the First," I answered.





WAITING: An Unfinished
Love Story, by Jean Madeline.
Translated from the French by
Florence MacIntyre Tyson*



“**W**ELL, it is decided—you are to go?”

“Yes, Suzanne; it is my destiny that demands it.”

She fixed her great, lovely eyes upon him sadly.

“You know it is not my fault—I would have been only too proud and happy to be your wife—but since that is not possible, go, my love. We must each ‘dree our own weird.’ You must go into a new world; lead a brilliant and full existence. You will be admired and sought for, and, I hope, very happy,—I—shall grow old amid the narrow life of a little town, a little road illumined by a little lamp—I shall always be a provincial, like those you make fun of in your books—I shall keep on wearing hoops, and shall look ridiculously. In the evening, after my pupils have gone to bed, sitting in the chimney-corner, I shall read your books and find my happiness in following the progress of your success, in seeing your name, your portrait in the papers, in hearing from a distance the sound of your triumphs. So I shall fasten to my existence a leaf from your laurel-wreath, which will enrich my humble, quiet life. Of course, like all girls, I have had my dream, which was that we should travel in the same compartment, to use one of your images, Sir Novelist; and I used to love to fancy that our road would always be the same, and that together we would go to the end, in the same corner of the car, where fate had placed us, without troubling ourselves about the stations called out along the way. But apparently you must change cars and here we separate. You get out—I remain in——” Then, seeing some one approach, she gave him the delicious smile of

*Translated for Short Stories.

a saleswoman, for sweet charity's sake, and offering him a flower: "See, Monsieur Gerbaud, pray buy these pinks—for the sake of the poor."

All around them, the 'charity bazaar' had stirred into unusual life, the chilly classrooms, whose bare walls were now garlanded with evergreens, among which the young girls, full of delight at finding themselves shopkeepers, were doing a thriving business.

In the halls, even in the gloomy courtyard, charming, coquettish little aprons were flashing about, while amid the universal gaiety, and offering of flowers and various trifles, many an opportunity was seized for a handclasp or whispered word—thus gathering a petal from the sad rose of Love.

It had begun as a little love affair, when they were children at school. She was the daughter of Madame Lantelme—School for Young Ladies—who were dubbed "the little blue girls," on account of their uniform. On Thursdays, and Sunday afternoons, when the "little blue girls" walked in pairs around the boulevard, under the drowsy plantain trees, they were always followed by a crowd of young wretches. Each one had his sweetheart; it was the fashion at the college. His had always been this slight, pale girl, with great, dark eyes, who walked behind the rest with her mother, with a seriousness and precocity beyond her years. She had stirred his youthful heart, whence sprung up a vague tenderness. And, too, on her side there awoke a certain agitation and trembling sympathy for that look that never failed to seek hers.

By degrees these uncertain impressions were crystallized into definite form, quite free from the usual coquetries and sillinesses usual in such cases, and simple nosegays of violets gravely offered and as gravely received, alone shed their fragrance over the birth of this love. When, grown up, she became the assistant of her mother in the school, and he was no longer a schoolboy, with ink-stained fingers, but a handsome young man, whose gaze began to catch glimpses of life, the seeds placed in the furrows of their hearts had burst into abundant bloom, and their love, already of long standing, seemed each to date from that hour in which, in the long ago, they had felt that they loved.

Then one day, Pierre Gerbaud, whose nature was sensitive and open to impressions and feelings, which, whirling through

his soul with irresistible force, united in the formation of his
 own life within him new needs, new desires. Walking
 among the narrow streets of his little native town, he was
 aware with a feeling of suffocation, an intense desire for a
 larger horizon, new faces, new things.

Whenever he went out he would come across those excellent
 shoe-shoepers, standing placidly before their doors, their
 expressionless eyes fixed intently upon the opposite wall.
 Their ideas were choked under a mass of flabby flesh, nor had
 they any thought of the world beyond, nor that men were
 created for aught else, than to sell shoes or to buy them. And
 above all else, it was these sanctimonious personifications of a
 narrow life, that drove Pierre Gerbaud to desperation. Their
 limited horizon, their existence, turning ceaselessly within
 the same circle of occupations and ideas with the meagre and
 resigned lassitude of horses in a treadmill, filled him with
 repulsion against which all that was his of youth and hope and
 aspiration revolted.

He recalled a memory of his childhood, when, during
 vacation, he would go by rail to pay a visit to a neighbouring
 village. On the opposite side towards the North the track
 lay straight amid its shining rails, then turning via the
 distance, and at this point there was a peak in the
 this little boy, who had never gone beyond the horizon of
 the known world. When he thought of the unknown lands,
 especially when he thought of the vastness of the world,
 he beheld the disc, and although he knew it was a mere
 would picture to himself all that lay beyond the horizon
 into the unknown, all notion of space was lost.

And now that the world beyond was a mere
 irresistible force, this disc once more became the
 termination of all his dreams, becoming the symbol of his
 efforts and desires, all the aspirations of his life.
 two aspects—the shoe-shoepers in the distance, and
 there arose within him an intense longing for the
 He became one of those men who, instead of being
 fire, who, instead of being a man, are a mere
 emotions, are pursued by the same passions, are
 pitating with life, and are filled with a sense of
 insufficiency brings to them a sense of despair.

One of his greatest disappointments was
 the bookshops where the new books were sold.

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temptingly under the gas jets. Over the harvest of little yellow books, filling the window, Pierre intoxicated himself with the fragrance of the freshly-cut leaves, and to turn with the tips of his fingers their still damp pages, filled him with strange delight. Then, choosing a volume, he would tear along the streets till people turned to look, and reaching the solitude of his own little room, he would immerse his trembling hands in its pages. But his especial joy was to loiter at the library of the railroad station where the portly goddess, who presided over the spot, would gaze from her corner curiously at the boy, who was always ready to stop among the books. For there he found united, the beverages that quenched but to augment his thirst—the intoxication of new books, and the stirring life of the station. In the midst of the clanging of bells, the shrieks of locomotives, the bustle of travelers, bringing with them the fascination of the unknown, he would console himself by fancying that to him, too, might sometime come the happiness of going away.

For a long time Pierre hesitated. For Madame Lantelme's daughter, whose humble livelihood was assured by "the little Blues," did not dare to even think of going. Her life rose before her colorless and straight, readymade without anything of mystery or the unforeseen. To help her mother, then to take her place educating little girls, who would leave her to enter life, become mammas, then grandmammas, while their children and grandchildren took their places in the bare classrooms; till gradually she would reach old age, cloistered within the same narrow horizon, the monotony of days each exactly like its predecessor.

But she accepted it all with the resignation of a nun. And when Pierre begged her to place her hand in his and together to face the unknown, she replied with a sad smile: "No, mon ami, it may not be. The Good Lord has not granted me a permit of travel."

Pierre came very near unpacking and settling down; for he loved tenderly and truly this frail maiden, whose sad, dark eyes showed sorrow born in silence and alone. And for a while he struggled against the fever that was consuming him. But it was of no avail, and at last he determined to go.

The train reached the disc, then passed it. Pierre felt this was the turning point of his life, and that he had indeed left

the past far behind him. He looked eagerly about. Paris was not yet there—but already Suzanne had disappeared.

A man descended from the railroad carriage. His hair was white and his eyes those of an old man. The porters approached: "Hotel de Luxembourg, m'sieur?" He shook his head, and standing with bent head and hands crossed behind him, looked about that station which his youth had quitted—to which his old age had returned. He turned towards the avenue. The bare branches of the trees shivered painfully under the chill of the violet sky, while the houses on each side assumed unwonted proportions in the misty November evening. He turned up the collar of his overcoat and, his hands still crossed behind him, he turned into the avenue.

He met very few people. Some servants who were hastening homeward after having filled their pitchers at the fountain. Once a hack, whose driver was whistling, passed. A sentinel, in front of the prefecture, had fallen asleep, and enveloped in his great military cloak, he looked like a pile of clothing. The traveler threw away his cigar.

On the other side of the avenue, they were lighting the lamps in front of a café; their brilliancy turned the twilight into darkness. The delicious dreaminess of this charming hour, into which but the outlines of things are apparent, was shaken by a crude reality, which brought a feeling of actual suffering to the lonely wayfarer.

Crossing the street, he stopped at the café. He read "Café de France," and saying to himself: "I don't know this: it must be something new," he went in.

A dozen people were seated at the tables, leaning their heads on their hands. The heads promptly were raised. Then they began to whisper, to move their chairs and evince a surprise full of curiosity at the entrance of a stranger. Then every one was still, but finally began to talk and form into parties to play dominoes.

He was seated on a bench with a glass of hot punch. As he looked unhappy and the collar of his coat was lined with fur, the host approached and addressed him: "Good evening! have you just arrived?" He replied "Yes," and raised the glass to his lips.

The host remained standing before him, his eyes fixed upon him. The other asked: "This café has just been opened?"

The man burst into a loud laugh. "Well, hardly! It is a matter of twenty-five years' standing." The traveler exclaimed in amazement: "Twenty-five years!" Then, bowing his head: "True! true!" And the image of his absence rose suddenly and took possession of him, till he seemed to perceive at a distance, as if at the end of a long tunnel, this little town the day he had left it. He remembered it was more than thirty years ago. He saw himself forgotten, a stranger to all that was around him, in which, indeed, he had no part. Then he seized his hat and went out, leaving his glass but half empty. The lamps of the esplanade were shining on the bare branches of the trees. In a corner a pile of chairs, used for the music in summer, was covered with a thick awning. The empty pathways re-echoed to every step.

But on the boulevard on the other side, the fronts of the houses were alight with the charm of the life of night. Not the night of the country, which erects a wall each side of the road, beyond which lie the silent sleeping fields; nor the dusty, chilly life of the suburbs. But the warm, soft night of the boulevards, through which pass exquisite toilettes, and fur mantles, and luxurious flashes from brilliant windows. Carriages returning from afternoon visits; charming figures in front of the shop windows, admiring the beautiful things there exposed, and leaving with smiles.

The man continued his way, more and more oppressed with the feeling that once he had been a part of it all, and that now he was nothing. Till this idea assumed within him a sensation of actual physical pain, among the trees and houses and passing people, each eager for his own elbow room, and especial portion of air. It was the unhealthy sensation of a broken, tossed-about creature, whose nerves are over-excited by his sufferings, with whom the slightest sensation assumes the keenness of pain.

So this poignant feeling drove him to quit the boulevard, where there were too many people, and to choose a deserted street, a poor country lane, lighted by but a single lamp.

There suddenly this feeling that was breaking his heart, melted into a vague, sweet sadness which at first he was unable to explain. But it brought him great consolation, as if, on the edge of this shadowy silence, all the agitation of his life, his unhappiness, the wretchedness of his evil days, had

disappeared amid the tenderness of familiar objects in this street so well known in the long ago.

And suddenly he understood.

He stopped before a two-story house. On the door was written:

SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES,
MADAME LANTELME.

As he stood before the stone steps, the emotions of his childhood returned. His heart beat so violently, he could almost hear it across the distance of thirty years. And once more he saw himself before this door a lad in short trousers, and later a young man, his heart full with his beautiful love. And then, for the first time in his life, he asked himself why, when this door was open, and a kiss was awaiting him behind it, he had not entered, seized it and kept it forever.

Before his weary eyes, there passed a vision of a smile given under the evening lamp, of a cozy, warm fireside. And he groaned in the cold, dark street, this poor victim of a bad life, who, after having struggled and broken his nails, had returned wounded and suffering with infinite weariness. Brusquely there arose before him the cold rigidity of the END, this immutable barrier, that shuts in our horizon. This sensation of the irretrievable fell upon him heavily, overwhelming him with despair.

He went onward.

After taking several steps he stopped and hesitated. Then returned drawn by an irresistible force. Once more the door was before him, and he rung the bell.

He waited and was on the point of leaving when he heard footsteps descending the stairs. The door opened.

A little old lady appeared, the strings of her cap falling each side of her face. She was very thin with that meagreness of an old maid, who has never known the development of maternity. She held in her hand a lamp raised high in order to see more clearly. Seen thus, she made one think of a little life shriveled up, then wrinkled, then bent, then—silence.

He asked: "Pardon, Madame. Madame Lantelme and her daughter once lived here— Would you perhaps know—Could you tell me——?"

The tiny old lady bent forward anxiously.

"I am Suzanne Lantelme, Monsieur."

She raised the lamp a little higher.

"You do not know me?" asked the man.

She shook her head: "No, no."

"Good-evening," he replied. And without another word he turned and was swallowed up by the darkness.

She mounted the stairs slowly, full of anxiety over this inexplicable, late visit.

Once upstairs, she opened the window to assure herself that the unknown man was not wandering about the house. But the little street was empty, cold and dark.

Then she seated herself once more in her little, solitary chamber, which was the sanctuary of a modest, tender, never-forgotten love. And, as happened every evening, the poor little, loving old lady resumed her knitting of mittens for him for whom she had been waiting thirty years, for whom she would wait until the end, and whom she did not know, when he came.





NDER the Great Shadow: An Adventure in Argentina*



LIGHT had come down on the pampas. Across the far-stretching reach of wide-rolling prairie the lights of La Vega glimmered faintly in the dim middle-distance. I watched them resolving themselves into separate and individual points of luminosity with feelings that were curiously mixed, but in which joyful satisfaction certainly bore a considerable part. A long day in the saddle lent additional charm to the prospect of a cosy corner and a comfortable pipe. Probably, had I known how near I was to come, before morning, to making my exit from La Vega in a sudden and involuntary manner, I should have been less eager about my entrance.

At Bejano I had obtained unwelcome confirmation of a piece of news, the first whisper of which had reached me at Los Santos. I was "drumming" for one of the two great houses which divided the wool and the hides of the Argentine; and about midway on my "stretch," which extended from the La Plata down almost to the Colorado, I heard that the agent of a rival was in front of me. The news fairly staggered me. It was a clean breach of the rules, and I found some difficulty in believing it. It was probably the rough jest of some practical joker, or perhaps the sorry attempt of some impudent pirate.

However, what had been doubtful at Los Santos became certainty at Bejano. My "run" was being worked, and I had a pretty good notion that I could even put a name to the "scut" who was working it. Between Los Santos and Bejano I did a lot of hard thinking. The man, I had ascertained, was a Levantine; my informant giving his age as thirty or there-

*From Chambers's Journal.

abouts. He was said to speak Spanish, French and Italian. Whether he had any knowledge of English I was unable to gather. But I heard that he was a mark with the "pictures," and played a good hand at poker.

At this point my thoughts would persistently revert to one Gregorio Stefanetti, a Greco-Italian who five years before had absconded from Nice after embezzling eighteen thousand francs from the leading banking-house in the municipality, in which he was employed. Stefanetti I knew to be a clever dog, both sleek and sly. There was some reason, too, why he might be tempted to take "a rise" out of me. I had known the man at Marseilles previous to his going to Nice, and had warned certain people against him.

Stefanetti was a master of languages, had the soft, insinuating manner of most Levantines, and was well acquainted with commercial forms and business routine. He had been tracked to Rio; but there all trace of him was lost. He would be about thirty-two at the present time; and as I called up his face from the dim crowd at the back of my memory, I seemed to recollect having seen a very similar set of features only a few weeks before on the fruit-quay in the Boca, the Italian water-side quarter of Buenos Ayres. It had made no impression on me then; but now, as I tried to find an answer to the riddle that was puzzling me, the face in the Boca stood out clear and distinct as the face of Gregorio Stefanetti. The closer I considered the matter, the more convinced did I become that the Levantine of my informant was the Stefanetti of the banking-house.

Scent, however, is proverbially capricious, and it was not till I reached Bejano that it began to lie. The farther he got from the iron road and the overhead wire, the less need for caution on the part of the adventurer. The growers in the Bejano district, therefore, had been advised by circular that Messer Emilio Corentini, the representative of the house of B. & B. of New York, would attend at the "Fonda los Angeles" on— (here followed the date), and would offer the highest price for wool of any house in the market; or consignments would be accepted for sale on commission.

It was really a most straightforward and business-looking document. He had stipulated that delivery was to commence immediately, and several loads had gone forward already.

The shape which the matter assumed, then, was this:

Stefanetti, who had a face of brass under his smooth olive skin, had evidently planned a bold *coup*. The wool-shipping season was just opening. Why not assume the rôle of agent for a commission house? He had a good appearance, a pliant tongue, a pretty wit; was familiar with the routine; and could start at the hour. If he could bag a few hundred bales there was a fortune for him, besides the satisfaction he would feel in scoring off me. I was just setting out to do my "stretch." He would precede me by a few days, and get well on the road before I should hear of him. In fact, he was just in time to put the thing through real smart, and with the minimum of risk. After passing Arrioba, beyond which the railway did not run, he might snap his fingers at pursuit, or purchase "justice" with a bribe. Moreover, wool would make an opening for "pasteboard" and Stefanetti knew a few tricks with the cards. Besides, the clever dog might argue, with ships in the river and freight on the road, would any agent who knew his business be likely to waste time peddling round to pick up information concerning the identity of Emilio Corentini, who had snatched a few crumbs from another man's table?

The rogue, I considered, could hardly calculate on securing more than a few hundred bales at most. Well, in any case, Gregorio, I did not doubt, had made preparation to meet the contingency.

La Vega, whose lights were now beginning to assume specific shape and distinct individuality, was to be my last place of call. If I did not happen on "Messer Corentini" at the "Fonda del Sarmiento," Stefanetti, I reckoned, would have won the game that he set out to play; and when I left Bejano, with a two and a-half days' journey still in front of me, the man had already been gone from there a week. Would he be likely to loiter, with me on his track? Hardly. Yet there is ever some odd fraction turning up unexpectedly to interfere with a man's calculations; so I pushed on, covering the best bits of a bad road as hard as a willing horse could drive; and as night was falling on the second day, I rode into La Vega.

As I turned my jaded beast into the straggling street, the sound of noisy revelry struck loud upon the ear. It came from the "Fonda." I was pumped—worn-out with the long, hard, anxious ride; and the blatant merriment seemed prophetic of disaster.

Passing to the back of the low mud-wall which enclosed the premises, I rode into the yard and made my way to the stables. The yard seemed deserted. In the stables, however, there were at least a dozen horses. Evidently the "Fonda" had no lack of guests.

I had been riding hard for two days with the purpose of exposing a rascal; but now, when I guessed he might be within touch, I had a strong feeling that the odds were against me; and prudence whispered caution in taking the fence.

There was a light in the kitchen, and I moved towards it. I thought it more than likely that I should there find pretty Manuelita, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Barcelona Pete, who ran the establishment. I had brought her a necklace—a showy but inexpensive affair—blue beads strung on thin gold wire. The girl would probably be in the kitchen. I would go there and ascertain who was in the *sala*.

Moving across the yard, I peeped in at the uncurtained window. A lamp was burning against the wall, but the room was empty.

A burst of laughter came from the *sala*. The noise and racket there were increasing. Out of a babel of voices I could distinguish tones of remonstrance. The windows on that side were furnished with jalousies, and these were closed; but from a hole high up in the wall streamed a narrow pencil of light.

I left the kitchen window and looked about for something that would enable me to reach the hole. Presently I stumbled over a ladder. Half the rungs were broken, and one side was longer than the other. But there was nothing else; so, rearing it against the wall, I climbed up. From my position on the ladder I could see over about half the room.

Immediately opposite the knot-hole sat a swarthy-faced individual whom I recognized as Don Felipe Ricardo, the steward of the largest *estancia* in the district. His lips were livid, his features distorted. He was staring stonily across the table at some one evidently sitting immediately beneath me. On the floor at his feet a number of playing-cards lay scattered about. Barcelona Pete, with the ace of spades in his hand, his heavy jaw working ponderously, and his broad, fat fingers gesticulating ludicrously, was hanging over Ricardo's shoulders, apparently endeavoring to explain the situation. The man below me was sitting too far back to be visible; but half-a-dozen *gauchos* (natives of the pampas) were drinking

with some girls at another table, each with a murderous *cuchillo* in his waist-belt. The presence of the girls seemed to indicate some sort of "function." Evidently there was to be a dance.

I tried all I knew to get a look at the man below me, but do what I could, I couldn't manage it. I felt convinced, however, that the man was Stefanetti. Presently he began to speak, and I was sure of it. There were tones in his voice that I remembered; but it was chiefly by a certain expletive that I fixed him. It was a favorite expression of Stefanetti's. He was protesting against an imputation of cheating. I happened to know that Stefanetti had been caught using a ring "hold-out" in the card-room of the Maritime Club at Marseilles, and was expelled in consequence.

Without doubt he had been practising some trick upon Ricardo. But what could be inducing him to linger on, when every day added to the risk of detection? He must know that if run to earth he would lose his profit. Evidently he had found some attraction at La Vega strong enough to cover the extra risk. Perhaps, thought I, he finds the business of plucking the pigeons returns him sufficient to pay for the risk. Perhaps, again, at a place on the 'outside edge,' like La Vega, he thinks to brave detection and to defy arrest.

At this juncture, my eye happening to fall on the sullen-looking visages of the half-drunken *gauchos*, for an instant my heart stood still. Surely he was not waiting for me! At that moment Manuelita passed through the room on her way to the kitchen, and the man below started up, ran out, and caught her by the waist. It was Gregorio Stefanetti. He seemed trying to persuade the girl to something; but she slipped from his grasp, made a rush for the door, and darted from the room.

Stefanetti came back laughing. "She's wild as a hawk now, Pete," I heard him say; "but by-and-by she'll come to my whistle."

I had mounted a step higher, in my eagerness to catch sight of the man's face. The rung was rotten, and now gave way beneath my weight, precipitating me to the ground. Picking myself up, I ran to the kitchen. Through the window I saw Manuelita. Her eyes looked as if she were crying. I tapped gently at the door and called her softly by name.

"Who's there?" she asked in a voice that betrayed trepidation.

I made myself known, and the next minute I was in the room.

"Oh señor!" gasped the girl, evidently surprised at my appearance. "I thought it was that jackal Emilio. He thinks I have gone to dress for the dance, and I was afraid he had followed me. I *hate* him—I do!"

"*Carrambole!* Manuelita, my girl," exclaimed I, "what's wrong with you? Who is Emilio, and what is he doing here?" Producing the little necklet, I threw it in her lap. "A present from Buenos Ayres," I said.

For a moment her eyes lit up with joy.

"How kind of you!" she exclaimed as she fastened the beads about her neck; but the next instant she burst into tears.

"Tell me what is the matter," said I, dropping into a chair. "Who is this man you call Emilio?"

Briefly, her story was this:

Emilio had known her father many years ago, when he kept a little wine-shop in the old town at Marseilles. She was a child then, and did not remember him. He had been staying in the house now for nearly a week—she looked at me curiously as she said this,—gambling every night with the *rancheros*. The small men had soon been cleaned out; but Ricardo, a man of wealth and substance, had been winning down to last night, when his luck turned; and to-night he had lost everything.

Emilio, I gathered, had been persecuting Manuelita with his attentions ever since he set foot in the place. There was something, she said, between her father and this man Emilio. He had asked for her hand in marriage, and Pete had promised it; Emilio undertaking to pay Pete fifty *pesos* (ten pounds) on the day of the betrothal, and to spend twenty for "the good of the house."

"Emilio," said Manuelita, "was returning to Buenos Ayres immediately." Her father had settled it with the *padre*, and she was to be married to-morrow. "But"—with the fiery temper of the glowing South blazed fiercely in the passionate words—"he shall never have me. No, señor, I hate him—I do; and I'll kill myself first."

I thought it very likely, from what I knew of Stefanetti, that there had been some previous passages between him and

Pete at the wineshop in Marseilles, and that this arrangement was intended to settle the account.

"And the *gauchos* are here for the betrothal, then?" I inquired.

"Yes, señor—for the dance."

So it was not for me he had been waiting, after all. Probably he had not expected me to reach La Vega till after he had gone.

"I don't think there'll be any necessity for you to kill yourself, Manuelita," I said. "I've a bone to pick with this gentleman myself. I'll go off to the guard-house and bring up the patrol."

As I uttered the words I laid hold of the chair. An exclamation of pain escaped me. For the first time I became aware that my right hand had been badly sprained by the fall from the ladder. At the same instant the door of the *sala* was opened; voices and footsteps were heard in the passage, coming towards the kitchen. I drew the bolt and stepped into the yard.

My hand was burning like a furnace, the pain increasing every minute. A bucket half-full of water stood outside a door which led into a flagged entry. Plunging in my hand, I bathed it repeatedly in the cooling element, which relieved the pain, and then I followed the entry, which I concluded would bring me into the street. At the end I passed through a swing-door, and discovered myself in a long narrow passage open to the sky. I followed it, turning sharply to the right, and suddenly I was in darkness. My fingers now grasped the handle of a door, which was opened from within, and the next moment I found myself in the *sala* of the 'Fonda.'

"Good-evening, Pete," said I, putting on a bold face and advancing towards him. "Any room for me? What's the occasion?"

I thought the man looked chippy.

"I didn't 'spect to see you down here, señor," he stammered, stealing a glance at Stefanetti, "for a couple of days yet."

"I allow it," I said, coming farther into the room. "But introduce me."

Pete turned half-round, and then I perceived Ricardo. He had his head on the table, and was apparently asleep. I kept my eyes on Stefanetti

"My friend, Señor Emilio Corentini," snuffed Pete, following the direction of my eyes, "acting for"—

"That man's name is Stefanetti," I broke in. I knew it must come, and wished it over. "I think you ought to know that, Pete. He's wanted by the French police for forgery and embezzlement."

I saw Pete turn livid under his olive skin.

"I challenge him to produce his authority to use the name of the firm he travels under. He's a fraud and a cheat. If he has won any man's money in your house, Pete, I tell that man not to part with a single *centesimo*. Gregorio Stefanetti, the man who sits yonder, was turned out of the Cercle Maritime at Marseilles for sharpening."

Stefanetti rose. His restraint was unnatural. He overdid it, and that brought on the crisis.

"Señor," he said coldly, "you have insulted me in a public room. I demand satisfaction."

"You shall have it," said I, "and quickly. I will ask Captain Gomez to wait upon you."

"*Sacré!*" he hissed between his teeth. "You will go to the patrol, will you? I think not;" and he whipped out his revolver.

The ball passed through my hair and buried itself in the wall. At the same instant my hands were seized from behind and pinioned to my sides. The pain this occasioned to my sprained limb was excruciating. I thought I should faint. I saw Pete pushing Stefanetti into his seat, and heard Manuelita whisper, "It is to save your life, señor. But, *por Dios*, your hand is bad."

There was a loud singing in my ears, the room swam round and I sank upon the floor. I didn't lose my senses, however, though I kept my eyes closed. Angry words were passing between Pete and Stefanetti.

Presently I distinguished the voice of Manuelita. "Why spoil the dance?" she was saying. "Twist a lasso round him and lock him in the kitchen. Then when the *gauchos* depart, let them take the *gringo* with them, and turn him loose on the pampas."

"*Bravo, bravissimo!*" chuckled Stefanetti. "A good idea. Why spoil the dance, indeed! Pass along that *riata*, Barcey. Here's Manuelita waiting to lend a hand.—Ah!" he continued, with a sudden change of tone, "so you've put on a new neck-

lace—have you, my beauty?—in honor of the evening, I suppose?”

The girl made no reply, and presently I heard him say, “A green hide—eh? Why, it’s strong enough to hold a bull. Rouse up, Barcey; and when our friend leaves the “Fonda” to-night, you can trust me to see that he doesn’t get into trouble again. Bring up the patrol, would he? How would that suit you, Pete?” and he grinned.

The men tied me up as tight as a mummy. Manuelita, fussing around under pretence of helping, managed to slacken the “turns” a bit here and there, taking special care of my injured hand. But for this I should have doubted the girl’s honesty, her proposal had been made with such seeming insistence and so heartily did she appear to second the efforts of the men.

When they had me fixed, four of the *gauchos* carried me into the kitchen; and with a sinking heart I heard Manuelita tell Stefanetti to lock the door and put the key in his pocket. The girl hadn’t whispered a word in explanation. Beyond the two sentences she had spoken when she seized hold of my arms I had nothing to trust to.

I had been lying on the mud floor for perhaps an hour, listening to the noise of the dancing; wondering if, after all, I was to be left to die on the pampas; and thinking what incomprehensible creatures women were, when the window was gently opened and Manuelita bounded lightly into the room. Stooping over my prostrate form, she cut the cords and I was free.

“Your horse is outside, señor,” she said, drawing the bolt of the door which opened on the yard. “Bring up the patrol—quick! But, for my sake, remember my father. Quick! There is no time to lose. I cannot stay, or I shall be missed.” Then she was gone.

I was pretty stiff, you may guess, and my hand gave me some trouble; but I was under the Great Shadow, and I managed to scramble into the saddle somehow.

“There’s your prisoner, *capitan*,” said I, addressing Captain Gomez. “Gregorio Stefanetti, *alias* Emilio Corentini, forger, swindler, cardsharp. Five years ago, *capitan*, certain people offered a reward for him; two thousand francs. It has never been withdrawn. It will be paid at Buenos Ayres to-day on compliance with the formalities. But have a care,

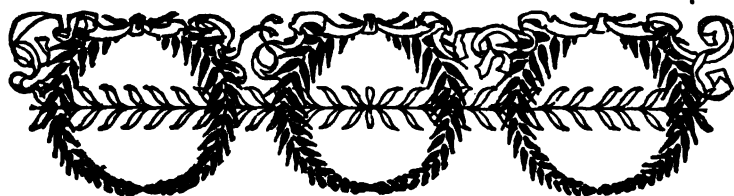
Captain Gomez. Your man's as crafty as a cat. He cheated the law once, remember. See that he doesn't cheat it again."

I had been back in Buenos Ayres some weeks when I was sent for by the chief. Captain Gomez was with him.

"*El capitan* has called to see me about that business of Stefanetti's," said he, glancing up from an official-looking document which he had been perusing. "If you'll be good enough to certify these papers, I think we may pay him the reward. The man, it seems, has been shot while attempting to escape."

I looked at the captain, but that officer was fiercely twirling the ends of his mustache, with his eye fixed on the cornice of the ceiling. The chief was filling up the order on Paris.

It is competent to every man to have an opinion, but it is not always expedient to express it. I did not express mine.





N Offer of Marriage:

**The Story of a French Wooing,
by Katharine L. Ferris. Illustra-
tions by Mabel L. Humphrey***



THE Englishman who, on being asked the way somewhere, said "Drive due east till your horse drops dead, then begin to inquire," was, we know, speaking of his own beloved metropolis. Otherwise one might have been tempted, so perfectly does the description fit, to think that he was indicating the whereabouts of a certain French village known to its inhabitants (and to a very few beside), as Sainte-Agathe-du-Haut-Pas.

As to the "due east," it depends, of course, from whence you come; but, leaving detail to be determined by circumstances, you will arrive at Sainte-Agathe only after you decide to follow the spirit of the directions given above. Some artist men and women wander in there every summer, for the place is not remote. It is merely untrodden of the tripper, being far beyond reach of the railway and out of the direct line of that Ultima Thule of the tourist, the high road, on which the great wave of travel, almost spent, breaks in a thin spray of bicycles propelled, apparently in the sole aim of covering as much country as possible while avoiding all sight of it save that of the ten feet of hard, white soil immediately ahead of the front wheel.

If one has really decided to go to Sainte-Agathe, the first step toward it is to take a ticket for another and quite distant town. Once there, the really exciting part of the journey begins. One does but rattle across the broad highway to plunge into a well-marked road of seemingly firm intentions, which, contrary to all expectations, suddenly grows tired and lies down and dies in a field. Its successor takes up the en-

*Written for Short Stories.

terprise manfully, drives through a wood, meanders out on the other side, struggles on in a series of short, sharp rises and then, quite out of temper, abandons, with a peevish twist, all idea of going to Sainte-Agathe and starts off at right angles for a more attainable goal.

The third road, unwillingly pressed into the service, dallies along between most enchanting hedge-rows all abloom, wanders vaguely up on to a broad plateau and, with the first sign of decision it has yet shown, stops short at a sign-post.

Finally, a brief but efficient byway takes the matter in hand and, plunging down one of the steepest hills I have ever seen, brings up in the heart of the village at the portal of that church from which the place takes its name, a church in size and beauty out of all proportion with the pigmy flock of cottages huddled round it.

Its patron saint, however, does her part by Sainte-Agathe. Some portion of her anatomy, carefully preserved in an amazing reliquary, is, it appears, possessed of marvelous healing properties, so that each Fifth of February sees a long train of variously disabled persons seeking the aid of the saint in their misfortunes. The belief in her power is the more firmly held by the inhabitants of Sainte-Agathe in that it is very profitable to their little town, and to money considerations the peasant mind is at least as widely opened as to religious superstitions, which is saying a good deal.

Once a year the fête day arrives, the village wakes into animation, but, the day of pilgrimage past, it quickly settles back into the somewhat stagnant tranquillity which reigns during eleven months of the year, a tranquillity ruffled, but not broken, by happenings of greater or less local importance—the inevitable births, deaths, marriages and scandals which appear as surely where two or three are gathered together as in the most overgrown of cities.

A traveler who, having triumphed over the discouragements we have mentioned, had wandered into Sainte-Agathe on a certain Wednesday in June 189—, would have found the tranquillity of that charming spot decidedly in abeyance. House-doors stood open and unwatched. Children transgressed all established rules of juvenile propriety unheeded and unreprieved. Cats feasted royally on left-overs which should have been put safely by to serve for another meal but were, in fact, left anyhow on tables and shelves. The Kér-

onacs' dog stole a valuable piece of mutton which never would have been bought at all save that it was the fête day of gran 'mère, and he had eaten the choice morsel and was innocently dozing in the sun long before Madame Kéronac, that carefullest of housewives, discovered her loss. Indeed, it was while she was returning from the butcher's with the mutton under her arm that she had made quite another discovery which excited her so much that, flinging the precious package down on the table, she went out again to share her news with a few friends. Soon by far the larger portion of the female population of Sainte-Agathe was gathered together in groups discussing the affair with much flinging abroad of hands, shrugging of shoulders and wagging of white-coiffed heads.

And truly, the stone which, suddenly thrown in its midst, had so agitated the pool, was of no common proportions. Figure to yourself that Madame Kéronac, quietly walking homeward with her mutton under her arm as before stated, had with her own eyes seen Joseph Tanguy, resplendently arrayed, (as no sane man would be of a Wednesday without grave cause), enter the house of Hippolyte Briac. This could bear but one interpretation. If Joseph Tanguy, a sober man, forty-five if he was a day, and a widower since three years ago, had put on his Sunday toggery in mid-week to visit Hippolyte, it was because he meant to demand the hand of one of Hippolyte's daughters in marriage.

Hippolyte had three daughters, but the second one was already married and the youngest was, as all the countryside knew, affianced to a grocer's clerk now doing his two years in the army, and she was but awaiting the term of his military service to help him set up again his counter and scales. Therefore, Tanguy must be gone to ask for the hand of Berthe. The village dames stood amazed. So



likely a man, not young, perhaps, but still in the prime of life and strength! No drunkard, either, and if—as was conceded—he had no great fortune, he was possessed of a field or two and a snug, tight house, and the first wife had left no children to trouble her successor. That, out of a whole villageful of possible mates, his choice should have fallen upon Hippolyte's Berthe! Hands were raised, mouths stood open, white caps wagged portentously.

Sainte-Agathe was perfectly aware that it was four years since Berthe had "coiffed Sainte Catherine." Consequently, she was now twenty-nine years old, and of a plainness—*mon Dieu!*—and without a sou. True, the other daughters had been equally dotless, but Emméline was a most amusing creature, and Eugénie was pretty enough to turn the head of any man, and to put a miser out of conceit of his money-bags. Whereas Berthe—oh, la! la!

On this pretext or that more than one loiterer happened to be near Hippolyte's house when its visitor came forth from it. He was accompanied to the door by both Hippolyte and his wife, they, also, dressed in their best, and wearing a Sabbath air of festivity. The visit had, then, been anticipated. Supposition turned into certainty. But, as Tanguy—a rather sober faced Tanguy—took leave of his jovial host, the latter was heard to cry, "Have no fear, Monsieur. She will reflect, she will reflect!" Certainty immediately gave way to blackest doubt. "Is it likely, I ask you," said Madame Kéronac (and not Madame Kéronac only), "that a penniless girl, above all, one who had coiffed Sainte Catherine four good years ago, should endanger so unheard-of a chance by taking time to reflect?"

But, though amazement lingered, doubt was, perforce expelled from the most skeptical mind when, the Sunday following, the Curé read, before the assembled congregation, the bans between Berthe Briac and Joseph Tanguy. Envy, if envy there was, clothed herself decently in conventional felicitations and was content to manifest herself by blending with them a somewhat unflattering surprise.

Tanguy, could he have been questioned, would have contributed little to satisfy the village wonder. He, himself, was not without a vague feeling of astonishment when he thought of the step he had taken. Berthe was certainly no subject to inspire a great passion, nor was Tanguy the man

to conceive one. Indeed, great passions in peasant communities are remarkable for their rarity, and were far less likely to intrude their inconvenient presences into the daily life of Sainte-Agathe-du-Haut-Pas, than in the most fashionable precincts of Vanity Fair. He had never, certainly, formulated to his own mind the sweetness, strength and capability in the girl's character which, dimly perceived, had pushed him on to try to make her his wife, and he could, perhaps, hardly be expected to distinguish in himself that strange sixth sense, possessed by many men, which enables them to tell at a glance just what woman out of a hundred will make them comfortable, and which explains so many sudden attractions. But the idea once formed, he acted on it promptly and clung to it, as might have been expected for a slow mind, with tenacity.

Tenacity was needed for, incredible as it seemed to her townspeople, Berthe *had* received his proposal coldly. All the enthusiasm had been on the part of Hippolyte and his wife. They had never dreamed of placing to such an advantage a daughter no longer young and never pretty—had, indeed, almost foregone the idea of placing her at all. Consequently, they were all delight; they fluttered and chattered and laughed, lending to the occasion that gaiety which it is conventionally supposed to produce spontaneously, but they did it alone. Tanguy was too conscious of the honor he was bestowing to regard it lightly, and he was very sensible that Berthe, who should, by all rights, have been in a turmoil of excitement and gratitude, was unaccountably cool and reluctant.

Certainly she wished to marry. Called upon to answer the middle-aged aspirant, she did not deny that it would please her much better to espouse Tanguy than to remain single, and she even opined that no woman could prefer to be an old maid in her father's house, a person without standing—to marrying and gaining thereby a position in the world. Still, she appeared anything but eager, said she must have time to reflect (a sentence afterward repeated by Hippolyte, as we have seen with an optimistic shade of meaning which she, be sure, had never meant to give it), and attached conditions to her marriage which were calculated to surprise her future husband more than they flattered him. She must have this—she must have that. Did Tanguy mean to take up farming? Because

in that case, she would require a servant. On the contrary, she was informed, he thought of buying a small business at which they both could work—say a little café. She let him see that that would please her better. If she married him—and patati and patata! Hippolyte was at his wits' ends, his good wife scarlet with apprehension, and Tanguy said to himself that he had not known Berthe was so proud. Fortunately, at least from Hippolyte's point of view, the effect of these cantrips upon him was the exact opposite of what the anxious parents feared. We cannot say that his lady's behavior was to the widower's desires as fire to tow. Nothing would ever flame in Tanguy's soul again. If he had once possessed an inflammable fibre it was gone from him—buried, perchance, in the grave of the wife of his youth. But under her coldness his intentions solidified into determination as water turns to ice at the touch of winter. Had she been the most accomplished of coquettes she could have acted no differently. Without warming to her, he swore to gain her, and from that moment he would have accepted her with much harder conditions than she was at all disposed to lay upon him. He felt that his dignity was at stake. Had he grown so old and so unpleasing that he was a fit subject for the slights even of a woman not young, plain and without a *dot*? He had no idea of allowing it to be thought so.

In fact Berthe was not proud. She herself was not the least bewildered of those who were asking why she was holding back from a lot which, two years before, she would have regarded as the greatest, the most unlooked-for, good luck. If she had looked into the depths of the heart she was afraid to question too closely, she would have recognized—and been half surprised to recognize—that she was acting from sentiment, a sentiment vague indeed, scarcely defined, never admitted, but strong enough to render the proposed marriage, advantageous as it was, repugnant to her.

It was somewhat over a year ago that Chauteroi, the great house of the neighborhood, being in need of repairs, the owner had got a company of workmen over from Brest. Among them came a certain Georges Lirienc, a young house painter, whose handsome face speedily made him the object of no ordinary interest to the girls of Sainte-Agathe. But if, in the six weeks he spent among them, any preference could have been attributed to him, that preference certainly took the

form of a shy friendship for Berthe, who was at least as old as he was, and, by reason of her twenty-eight years, and her lack of good looks, had come to be regarded as one no longer in the running. Partly because of this, no doubt, but largely because his liking seldom carried him the length of open demonstration of any sort, it had passed unremarked even in Sainte-Agathe, inordinately greedy, as are all village communities, for gossip; so that the last thing to occur to dame or damsel, as a basis for the girl's extraordinary conduct—it was acknowledged to be extraordinary—would have been a *tendresse* for Georges Lirenc, so little known, so soon lost to view. Indeed, the half impression he made upon her was due far more to the charm of personality, instinct with beauty and youth on one who had never possessed the first, and no longer possessed the second, than to anything which had passed between them, and the vague feeling which undoubtedly existed at the bottom of her heart and was kept sacred to his memory would soon have faded quite away had it not been for one episode.



Plonarel, Sainte-Agathe's nearest neighbor, had been visited by one of those caravans, half circus and half variety show, which are so often to be met with in France, and all the young people of one village, including several couples, whose only claim to be so classed was the unquenchable exuberance of their spirits, had gone to make merry in the other, to swing in the swings, ride on the wooden horses, try their luck in the shooting galleries and otherwise divert themselves as is but seemly at a fête.

It was almost midnight when they turned their faces homeward and stepped on to the white, moonlit road which stretched between Plonarel and Sainte-Agathe. Berthe and Georges were walking together, but by no means alone. A running fire of pleasantries in which they were expected to bear a part, and to bear it with a certain country cleverness, under pain of becoming butts for the whole company, would

effectually have prevented any attempt at a tête-à-tête. Not that Georges made any such attempt. That was never his way. It was toward the end of his stay, and he was talking somewhat discursively of his prospects—of how he would go back to Brest where he had a place waiting for him, or would, perhaps, adventure as far as Paris where a strong fellow not afraid of work could always make money, he had heard, and more easily than in the provincial towns. He had pulled two or three hedge-row flowers and was combining them, as he spoke, with a few grasses and leaves, laying them this way and that and finally binding them together with one of their own stems. The somewhat disheveled result of this amateur florist's work he suddenly held out toward Berthe.

"In my village," he said, "when a man offers a girl flowers, he means to ask her to wait until he can put together enough money to come and get her."

The girl looked at him amazed, then, thinking that she was but listening to one more of the pleasantries which he had been carrying on with much spirit during the evening, she pitched her answer in the same key.

"In *my* village," she retorted smartly, "if a man had nothing better than that to say to a girl, she would ask him to pass that way again when he could tell her something worth listening to."

And then—too late—she seemed to see that he had not been joking.

"Ah," he said, with a long breath, that was almost a sigh, "perhaps your way is safer. All the same—take my flowers, Berthe."

She took the poor little bunch in silence, and almost in silence they finished their walk. Later, in the privacy of her tiny attic, she put one of the flowers in her prayer-book and tried to put it out of her thoughts together with the whole occurrence, which had somehow left her both vexed and sad.

The leavetaking came a few days after, and the adieux were, perforce, made in the presence of both Hippolyte and his wife. Georges showed no rancor, but also no *empressement*, showed nothing, indeed, but the kindest spirit of friendliness, and Berthe congratulated herself heartily that she had not been duped into taking more seriously what was evidently, after all, only an awkward joke, thrown out, perhaps, to see what she would say. It was not likely, it was

most improbable that he had meant what he said. And yet what her reason admitted, her heart denied. Underneath all the likelihoods and probabilities in the world, a feeling persisted and grew that he had been in earnest. Cried down, ridiculed, it still proclaimed itself, until at times she was near acknowledging it, near owning that she was waiting, and glad



to wait, for Georges Lirienc until he should have saved money enough to come back and claim her.

Alas! it was Tanguy who came—Tanguy with his perfectly reasonable and very advantageous proposal; and the reluctance she had shown, the conditions she had put to giving her consent had been an ineffectual effort to delay a result which

she knew must come. For, after all, she had no reason to give for refusing a chance which, eighteen months ago, would have surpassed her wildest aspirations, and which was held by the whole village to be an inexplicable piece of luck. Georges had gone and, except to hear indirectly that he had indeed gone to Paris, she had had no news of or from him, no cause to suppose that he had ever given her a thought.

So it was that the curé read the bans on Sunday between Joseph Tanguy and Hippolyte's Berthe, and preparations for the wedding went merrily on. Tanguy, now that he felt less sure of Berthe's attitude of mind, was anxious to push the affair to a conclusion, nor were the girl's parents of any other way of thinking. They would all three have been exceedingly mortified to show themselves balked, and consequently ridiculous, in the eyes of their neighbors.

The lover's way was made none too easy for him during the three weeks that preceded the wedding.

He heartily wished to gain favor, and made a great show of deferring to her advice and consulting her about everything. She gave her opinion if she must, sometimes sullenly, sometimes with a nervous irritability painful to witness, but always as shortly as possible. About a week before the eventful day, he came in, all importance, to ask what coat he should wear to be married in, what hat, what shoes.

"I have lived so long alone that I don't know what I ought to do," he said, "but I should like to look well and do you credit, mademoiselle."

"Ah, b'en, wear what you please," answered his lady sharply. "What difference does it make to me, do you suppose? I sha'n't go back of my bargain because of your coat or shoes."

After that he asked her no more questions, accounting for her rudeness by saying that of course, she was not herself. Her prospects had upset and unnerved her. After the event she would be calmer, quieter, as he had always known her.

On Saturday, three days after the wedding, the new Madame Tanguy was standing at the door of the café with her knitting in her hands. She was not looking at her needles though they were flying at a surprising rate. She was watching the village postman who, on his afternoon round, was coming toward her up the street, stopping at this house and

at that, giving and receiving the news of the day as well as a few letters, and followed by the sound of merriment, for he was a pleasant fellow, fond of his joke. When he came to the café he stopped and, ceremoniously doffing his hat, asked:

"Does Mademoiselle Berthe Briac live here?"

"No, she doesn't," retorted the young woman. "But," she seemed to consider; "if you like to leave a message for her I can give it to her."

"Well, I guess I can't do wrong in leaving you this letter," he answered, and, as he held out the envelope, "The latest news from Paris," he went on. "Is he chic, at least, your type! What paper, as thick as parchment!"

As she turned away into the little room back of the café, which was their kitchen and dining-room in one, she saw that the letter bore, indeed, the Paris postmark, and while she opened it she wondered who her unknown correspondent could be for, to her knowledge, she had neither friends nor relatives in the great city.

The letter ran thus:

"**MADemoisELLE**:—It is more than a year since I offered you the flowers and you told me that the men of Sainte-Agathe did not speak until they had something worth telling. That is why, mademoiselle, I have given you no news of me. But now you will permit me to speak, for I have established myself with a color merchant, a fine position. I am getting good wages, and he will make me his partner in a year or two, if all goes well. In consequence I can ask you, not to wait for me, but to marry me, if that would give you pleasure, mademoiselle. If you find this agreeable to you, send me a letter to 6 Rue Daguerre, Paris. In waiting, accept, mademoiselle, the most sincere sentiments of your devoted

GEORGES LIRIENC."

There was silence in the little room. The sun shone on the new copper cooking utensils, and fell, in a broad shaft, on the clean brisk floor. The kitten which the mistress had brought with her from her old home, rose and stretched itself and finally fell asleep again, its nose buried in its fluffy tail. The tall clock scrupulously counted the seconds—tick-tack, tick-tack, and Berthe sat on and on, one hour, two, gazing before her with dreadful eyes which, for all their stare, saw nothing.

Suddenly Tanguy bustled into the café.

"Berthe," he called, "where are you, Berthe? There are customers waiting at the outside tables."

As he stood at the door, looking in upon her, he did not see the letter in her lap, for the table was between them, but he *did* note the indolence of her attitude.

"Some glasses, Berthe, and some white wine, quick," he said, "while I get the siphons. You understand, my little



friend, it is not by doing nothing that one builds up a business."

He turned away, very *affairé* and important, as pleased as a child that there were customers waiting, that he could do the honors of his new establishment.

Madame Tanguy arose, slowly and painfully, like an old woman. She felt stiff and ill. Furtively she thrust the letter into her bosom, and then, with dragging step, went out to do her husband's bidding.



WHICH Was the Mad- man?: The Story of a Strange Case, by Edmond About. Translated from the French.



ONE might pass Dr. Auvray's house twenty times without suspecting the miracles that are wrought there. It is a modest establishment near the end of Montaigne Avenue, between Prince Soltikoff's Gothic palace and the gymnasium. The unpretentious iron gates open into a small garden, filled with lilacs and rosebushes. The porter's lodge is on the left side of the gateway; the wing containing the doctor's office and the apartments of his wife and daughter are on the right; while the main building stands with its back to the street and its south windows overlook a small grove of horsechestnuts and lindens.

It is there that the doctor treats, and generally cures, cases of mental aberration. I would not introduce you into his house, however, if you incurred any risk of meeting frenzied lunatics or hopeless imbeciles. You will be spared all such harrowing sights. Dr. Auvray is a specialist, and treats cases of monomania only. He is an extremely kind-hearted man, endowed with plenty of shrewdness and good sense; a true philosopher, an untiring student, and an enthusiastic follower of the famous Esquirol.

Having come into possession of a small fortune soon after the completion of his medical course, he married, and founded the establishment which we have described. Had there been a spark of charlatanism in his composition, he could easily have amassed a fortune, but he had been content to merely earn a living. He shunned notoriety, and when he effected a wonderful cure, he never proclaimed it upon the house-tops.

His very enviable reputation had been acquired without any effort on his part, and almost against his will. Would you have a proof of this? Well, his treatise on monomania, published by Baillière in 1852, has passed through six editions, though the author has never sent a single copy to the newspapers. Modesty is a good thing, certainly, but one may carry it too far. Mademoiselle Auvray will have a dowry of only twenty thousand francs, and she will be twenty-two in April.

About a month ago, a hired coupé stopped in front of Dr. Auvray's door, from which two men alighted and entered the office. The servant asked them to be seated, and await his master's return.

One of the visitors was about fifty years of age, a tall, stout, dark-complexioned but ruddy-faced man, rather ungainly in figure and appearance. He had thick, stubby hands and enormous thumbs. Picture a laboring man, dressed in his employer's clothes, and you have M. Morlot.

His nephew, Francis Thomas, is a young man, about twenty-three years old; but it is very difficult to describe him, as there is nothing distinctive either in his manner or appearance. He is neither tall nor short, handsome nor ugly, stout nor thin—in short, he is commonplace and mediocre in every respect, with chestnut hair, and of an extremely retiring disposition, manner and attire. When he entered Dr. Auvray's office, he seemed to be greatly excited. He walked wildly to and fro, as if unable to remain in one place; looked at twenty different things in the same instant, and would certainly have handled them all if his hands had not been tied.

"Compose yourself, my dear Francis," said his uncle, soothingly. "What I am doing is for your own good. You will be perfectly comfortable and happy here, and the doctor is sure to cure you."

"I am not sick. There is nothing whatever the matter with me. Why have you tied my hands?"

"Because you would have thrown me out of the window, if I had not. You are not in your right mind, my poor boy, but Dr. Auvray will soon make you well again."

"I am as sane as you are, uncle; and I can't imagine what you mean. My mind is perfectly clear and my memory excellent. Shall I recite some poetry to you, or construe some Latin? I see there is a Tacitus here in the bookcase.

Or, if you prefer, I will solve a problem in algebra or geometry. You don't desire it? Very well, then listen while I tell you what you have been doing this morning.

"You came to my room at eight o'clock, not to wake me, for I was not asleep, but to get me out of bed. I dressed myself without any assistance from Germain. You asked me to accompany you to Dr. Auvray's; I refused; you insisted; then Germain aided you in tying my hands. I shall dismiss him this evening. I owe him thirteen days' wages; that is to say, thirteen francs, as I promised to pay him thirty francs a month. You, too, owe him something, as you are the cause of his losing his New Year's gift. Isn't this a tolerably clear statement of the facts? Do you still intend to try to make me out a lunatic? Ah, my dear uncle, let your better nature assert itself. Remember that my mother was your sister. What would my poor mother say if she saw me here? I bear you no ill-will, and everything can be amicably arranged. You have a daughter."

"Ah, there it is again. You must certainly see that you are not in your right mind. I have a daughter—I? Why, I am a bachelor, as you know perfectly well."

"You have a daughter——" repeated Francis, mechanically.

"My poor nephew, listen to me a moment. Have you a cousin?"

"A cousin? No, I have no cousin. Oh, you won't catch me there. I have no cousin, either male or female."

"But I am your uncle, am I not?"

"Yes; you are my uncle, of course, though you seem to have forgotten the fact this morning."

"Then if I had a daughter, she would be your cousin; but as you have no cousin, I can have no daughter."

"You are right, of course. I had the pleasure of meeting her at Ems last summer with her mother; I love her; I have reason to believe that she is not indifferent to me, and I have the honor to ask you for her hand in marriage."

"Whose hand, may I ask?"

"Your daughter's hand."

"Just hear him," Morlot said to himself. "Dr. Auvray must certainly be very clever if he succeeds in curing him. I am willing to pay him six thousand francs a year for board and treatment. Six thousand francs from thirty thousand,

leaves twenty-four thousand. How rich I shall be! Poor Francis!"

He seated himself again, and picked up a book that chanced to be lying on a table near him.

"Calm yourself," he said soothingly, "and I will read you something. Try to listen. It may quiet you."

Opening the volume, he read as follows:

"'Monomania is opinionativeness on one subject; a persistent clinging to one idea; the supreme ascendancy of a single passion. It has its origin in the heart. To cure the malady, the cause must be ascertained and removed. It arises generally from love, fear, vanity, overweening ambition or remorse, and betrays itself by the same symptoms as any other passion; sometimes by boisterousness, gaiety and garrulousness; sometimes by extreme timidity, melancholy, and silence.

As M. Morlot read on, Francis became more quiet, and at last appeared to fall into a peaceful slumber.

"Bravo!" thought the uncle, "here is a triumph of medical skill already. It has put to sleep a man who was neither hungry nor sleepy!"

Francis was not asleep, but he was feigning sleep to perfection. His head drooped lower and lower, and he regulated his heavy breathing with mathematical exactness. Uncle Morlot was completely deceived. He went on reading for some time in more and more subdued tones; then he yawned; then he stopped reading; then he let the book drop from his hands and closed his eyes, and in another minute he was sound asleep, to the intense delight of his nephew, who was watching him maliciously out of the corner of his eye.

Francis began operations by scraping his chair on the uncarpeted floor, but M. Morlot moved no more than a post. Francis then tramped noisily up and down the room, but his uncle snored the louder. Then the nephew approached the doctor's desk, picked up an eraser that was lying there, and with it finally succeeded in cutting the rope that bound his hands. On regaining his liberty he uttered a smothered exclamation of joy; then he cautiously approached his uncle. In two minutes, M. Morlot himself was securely bound, but it had been done so gently and so adroitly that his slumbers had not been disturbed in the least.

Francis stood admiring his work for a moment; then he

stooped and picked up the book that had fallen to the floor. It was Dr. Auvray's treatise on monomania. He carried it off into a corner of the room and began to read it with much apparent interest, while awaiting the doctor's coming.

CHAPTER II.

It is necessary to revert briefly to the antecedents of this uncle and nephew. Francis Thomas was the only son of a former toy-merchant, on the Rue de Saumon. The toy trade is an excellent business, about one hundred per cent. profit being realized on most of the articles; consequently, since his father's death, Francis had been enjoying that ease generally known as honest ease; possibly because it enables one to live without stooping to sordid acts; possibly, too, because it enables one to keep one's friends honest, also. In short, he had an income of thirty thousand francs a year.

His tastes were extremely simple, as I have said before. He detested show, and always selected gloves, waistcoats and trousers of those sober hues shading from dark brown to black. He never carried an eyeglass for the very good reason, he said, that he had excellent eyesight; he wore no scarf-pin, because he needed no pin to hold his cravat securely; but the fact is, he was afraid of exciting comment. He would have been wretched had his sponsors bestowed upon him any save the most commonplace names; but, fortunately, his cognomens were as modest and unpretending as if he had chosen them himself.

His excessive modesty prevented him from adopting a profession. When he left college, he considered long and carefully the seven or eight different paths open before him. A legal career seemed to be attended with too much publicity; the medical profession was too exciting; business too complicated. The responsibilities of an instructor of youth were too onerous; the duties of a government official, too confining and servile. As for the army, that was out of the question, not because he feared the enemy, but because he shuddered at the thought of wearing a uniform; so he finally decided to live on his income, not because it was the easiest thing to do, but because it was the most unobtrusive.

But it was in the presence of the fair sex that his weakness became most apparent. He was always in love with some-

body. Whenever he attended a play or a concert he immediately began to gaze around him in search of a pretty face. If he found one to his taste, the play was admirable, the music perfection; if he failed, the whole performance was detestable, the actors murdered their lines, and all the singers sang out of tune. He worshipped these divinities in secret, however, for he never dared to speak to one of them.

When he fancied himself a victim to the tender passion, he spent the greater part of his time in composing the most impassioned declarations of love, which never passed his lips, however. In imagination he addressed the tenderest words of affection to his adored one, and revealed the innermost depths of his soul to her; he held long conversations with her, delightful interviews, in which he furnished both the questions and answers. His burning protestations of undying love would have melted a heart of ice, but none of his divinities were ever aware of his aspirations and longings.

It chanced, however, in the month of August of that same year, about four months before he so adroitly bound his uncle's hands, that Francis had met at Ems a young lady almost as shy and retiring as himself, a young lady whose excessive timidity seemed to imbue him with some of the courage of an ordinary mortal. She was a frail, delicate *Parisienne*—pale as a flower that had blossomed in the shade, and with a skin as transparent as an infant's. She was at Ems in company with her mother, who had been advised to try the waters for an obstinate throat trouble, chronic laryngitis, if I remember right. The mother and daughter had evidently led a very secluded life, for they watched the noisy crowd with undisguised curiosity and amazement. Francis was introduced to them quite unexpectedly by one of his friends who was returning from Italy by way of Germany. After that, Francis was with them almost constantly for a month; in fact, he was their sole companion.

For sensitive, retiring souls, a crowd is the most complete of solitudes; the more people there are around them, the more persistently they retreat to a corner to commune with themselves. Of course, the mother and daughter soon became well acquainted with Francis, and they grew very fond of him. Like the navigator who first set foot on American soil, they discovered some new treasure every day. They never inquired whether he was rich or poor; it was enough for them

to know that he was good. Francis, for his part, was inexpressibly delighted with his own transformation. Have you ever heard how spring comes in the gardens of Russia? One day everything is shrouded in snow; the next day, a ray of sunshine appears and puts grim winter to flight. By noon, the trees are in bloom; by night they are covered with leaves; a day of two more, and the fruit appears.

The heart of Francis underwent a similar metamorphosis. His reserve and apparent coldness disappeared as if by magic, and in a few short weeks the timid youth was transformed into a resolute, energetic man—at least to all appearances. I do not know which of the three persons first mentioned marriage, but that is a matter of no consequence. Marriage is always understood when two honest hearts avow their love.

Now Francis was of age, and undisputed master of himself and his possessions, but the girl he loved had a father whose consent must be obtained, and it was just here that this young man's natural timidity of disposition reasserted itself. True, Claire had said to him, "You can write to my father without any misgivings. He knows all about our attachment. You will receive his consent by return mail."

Francis wrote and rewrote his letter a hundred times, but he could not summon up the courage to send it.

Surely the ordeal was an easy one, and it would seem as though the most timorous mind could have passed through it triumphantly. Francis knew the name, position, fortune, and even the disposition of his prospective father-in-law. He had been initiated into all the family secrets, he was virtually a member of the household. The only thing he had to do was to state in the briefest manner who he was and what he possessed. There was no doubt whatever as to the response; but he delayed so long that at the end of a month Claire and her mother very naturally began to doubt his sincerity. I think they would have waited patiently another fortnight, however, but the father would not permit it. If Claire loved the young man, and her lover was not disposed to make known his intentions, the girl must leave him at once. Perhaps Mr. Francis Thomas would then come and ask her hand in marriage. He knew where to find her.

Thus it chanced that, one morning when Francis went to invite the ladies to walk as usual, the proprietor of the hotel informed him that they had returned to Paris, and that their

apartments were already occupied by an English family. This crushing blow, falling so unexpectedly, destroyed the poor fellow's reason, and rushing out of the house like a madman, he began a frantic search for Claire in all the places where he had been in the habit of meeting her. At last, he returned to his own hotel with a violent sick headache, which he proceeded to doctor in the most energetic manner. First, he had himself bled, then he took baths in boiling hot water, and applied the most ferocious mustard plasters; in short, he avenged his mental tortures upon his innocent body. When he believed himself cured, he started for France, firmly resolved to have an interview with Claire's father before even changing his clothes. He traveled with all possible speed, jumped off the train before it stopped, forgetting his baggage entirely, sprang into a cab and shouted to the coachman:

"Drive to her home as quick as you can!"

"Where, sir?"

"To the house of Monsieur—on the—the Rue—I can't remember." He had forgotten the name and address of the girl he loved.

"I will go home," he said to himself, "and it will come back to me."

So he handed his card to the coachman, who took him to his own home.

His concierge was an aged man, with no children, and named Emmanuel. On seeing him, Francis bowed profoundly, and said:

"Sir, you have a daughter, Mademoiselle Claire Emmanuel. I intended to write and ask you for her hand in marriage, but decided it would be more seemly to make the request in person."

They saw that he was mad, and his uncle Morlot, in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, was immediately summoned.

Now Uncle Morlot was the most scrupulously honest man on the Rue Charonne, which, by the way, is one of the longest streets in Paris. He manufactured antique furniture with conscientious care, but only mediocre skill. He was not a man to pass off ebonized pine for real ebony, or a cabinet of his own make for a mediæval production; and yet, he understood the art of making new wood look old and full of apparent worm-holes, as well as anybody living; but it was a principle of his never to cheat or deceive anyone. With almost absurd

moderation for a follower of this trade, he limited his profits to five per cent. over and above the expenses of the business, so he had gained more esteem than money. When he made out a bill, he invariably added up the items three times, so afraid was he of making a mistake in his own favor.

After thirty years of close attention to business he was very little better off than when he finished his apprenticeship. He had merely earned his living, just like the humblest of his workmen, and he often asked himself rather enviously how his brother-in-law had managed to acquire a competence. If this brother-in-law, with the natural arrogance of a *parvenu*, rather looked down on the poor cabinet-maker, the latter, with all the pride of a man who has not tried to succeed financially, esteemed himself all the more highly. He gloried in his poverty, as it were; and said to himself with plebeian pride: "I, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that I owe nothing to anyone."

Man is a strange animal: I am not the first person who has made that remark. This most estimable Monsieur Morlot, whose overscrupulous probity made him almost a laughing-stock, experienced a singular feeling of elation in his secret heart when he was apprised of his nephew's condition. An insinuating voice whispered softly: "If Francis is insane, you will become his guardian."

"You will be none the richer," responded Conscience, promptly.

"And why not?" persisted the Tempter. "The expenses of an insane person never amount to thirty thousand francs a year. Besides, you will be put to a great deal of trouble and have to neglect your business, very probably, so it is only right that you should receive some compensation. You will not be wronging anyone by taking part of the money."

"But one ought to expect no compensation for such services to a member of one's family," retorted the voice of Conscience.

"Then why have the members of our family never done anything for me? I have been in straightened circumstances again and again, and have found it almost impossible to meet my obligations, but neither my nephew Francis nor his deceased father ever rendered me the slightest assistance."

"Nonsense," replied his better nature; "this attack of insanity is nothing serious. Francis will be himself again in a few days."

"It is just as probable that the malady will wear him out and that you will come into possession of the entire property," persisted the wily Tempter.

The worthy cabinet-maker tried to close his ears to the insidious voice, but his ears were so large that the subtle, persistent voice glided in, despite all his efforts. The establishment on the Rue Charonne was intrusted to the care of the foreman, and the uncle took up his abode in his nephew's comfortable apartments. He slept in an excellent bed, and enjoyed it very much; he sat down to a well-spread table, and the indigestion, which had tormented him for years, vanished as if by enchantment. He was waited upon and shaved by Germain, his nephew's valet, and he speedily came to regard such attentions as a necessity. Gradually, too, he became accustomed to seeing his nephew in this deplorable condition, and to quite reconcile himself to the idea that he would never be cured, but all the while he kept repeating to himself, as if to ease his conscience, "I am wronging nobody."

At the expiration of three months he had become very tired of having an insane person shut up in the house with him—for he had long since begun to consider himself at home—and his nephew's incessant maundering, and continual requests for Mlle. Claire's hand in marriage, became an intolerable bore. He therefore resolved to get rid of him by placing him in Dr. Auvray's insane asylum.

"After all, my nephew will be much better cared for there," he said to himself, "and I shall be much easier in mind. Everyone admits that the best way to divert a lunatic's mind is to give him a change of scene, so I am only doing my duty."

It was with this very thought in his mind that he fell asleep just before Francis bound his hands. What an awakening was his!

The doctor entered with a smiling excuse for his long delay. Francis rose, laid his book on the table, and proceeded with volubility to explain the business that had brought him there.

"It is my uncle on my mother's side that I desire to intrust to your care," he began. "He is, as you see, a man between forty-five and fifty years of age, accustomed to manual labor and the economy and privations of an humble and busy life; moreover, he was born of healthy, hard-working parents, in a family where no case of mental aberration was ever before

known. You will not, therefore, be obliged to contend with an hereditary malady. His is probably one of the most peculiar cases of monomania that has ever come under your observation. His mood changes almost instantaneously from one of extreme gayety to profound melancholy. In fact, it is a strange compound of monomania and melancholy."

"He has not lost his reason entirely?"

"Oh, no; he is never violent; in fact, he is insane upon one subject only."

"What is the nature of his malady?"

"Alas! the besetting sin of the age, sir; cupidity. He has become deeply imbued with the spirit of our times. After working hard from childhood, he finds himself still comparatively poor, while my father, who began life under like circumstances, was able to leave me a snug little fortune. My uncle began by being envious of me; then the thought occurred to him that, being my only relative, he would become my heir in case of my death, and my guardian in case I became insane; and as it is very easy for a weak-minded person to believe whatever he desires to believe, the unfortunate man soon persuaded himself that I had lost my reason. He has told everybody that this is the case; and he will soon tell you so. In the carriage, though his hands were tied, he really believed that it was he who was bringing me here."

"When did this malady first show itself?"

"About three months ago. He came to my concierge and said to him, in the wildest manner: 'Monsieur Emmanuel, you have a daughter. Let me in, and then come and assist me in binding my nephew.'"

"Is he aware of his condition? Does he know that his mind is affected?"

"No, sir, and I think that is a favorable sign. I should add, however, that his physical health is somewhat impaired, and he is much troubled with indigestion and insomnia."

"So much the better; an insane person who sleeps and eats regularly is generally incurable. Suppose you allow me to wake him."

Dr. Auvray placed his hand gently on the shoulder of the sleeper, who instantly sprang to his feet. The first movement he made was to rub his eyes. When he discovered that

his hands were tied, he instantly suspected what had taken place while he was asleep, and burst into a hearty laugh.

"A good joke, a very good joke!" he exclaimed.

Francis drew the doctor a little aside.

"Sir, in five minutes he will be in a towering rage," he whispered.

"Let me manage him. I know how to take him."

The good doctor smiled on the supposed patient as one smiles on a child one wishes to amuse. "Well, you wake in very good spirits, my friend; did you have a pleasant dream?" he asked affably.

"No, I had no dream at all; I'm merely laughing to find myself tied up like a bundle of fagots. One would suppose that I was the madman, instead of my nephew."

"There, I told you so," whispered Francis.

"Have the goodness to untie my hands, doctor. I can explain better when I am free."

"I will unbind you, my friend, but you must promise to give no trouble."

"Can it be, doctor, that you really take me for an insane person?"

"No, my friend, but you are ill, and we will take care of you, and, I hope, cure you. See, your hands are free; don't abuse your liberty."

"What the devil do you imagine I'll do? I came here merely to bring my nephew."

"Very well, we will talk about that matter by-and-by. I found you sound asleep. Do you often fall asleep in the daytime?"

"Never! It was that stupid book that—"

"Oh, ho! This is a serious case," muttered the author of the book referred to. "So you really believe that your nephew is insane?"

"Dangerously so, doctor. The fact that I was obliged to bind his hands with this very rope is proof of that."

"But it was your hands that were bound. Don't you recollect that I just untied them?"

"But let me explain—"

"Gently, gently, my friend, you are becoming excited. Your face is very red; I don't want you to fatigue yourself.

Just be content to answer my questions. You say that your nephew is ill?"

"Mad, mad, mad, I tell you!"

"And it pleases you to see him mad?"

"What?"

"Answer me frankly. You don't wish him to be cured, do you?"

"Why do you ask me that?"

"Because his fortune is under your control. Don't you wish to be rich? Are you not disappointed and discouraged because you have toiled so long without making a fortune? Don't you very naturally think that your turn has come now?"

M. Morlot made no reply. His eyes were riveted on the floor. He asked himself if he was not dreaming, and tried his best to decide how much of this whole affair was real, and how much imaginary, so completely bewildered was he by the questions of this stranger, who read his heart as if it had been an open book.

"Do you ever hear voices?" inquired Dr. Auvray.

Poor M. Morlot felt his hair stand on end, and remembering that relentless voice that was ever whispering in his ear, he replied mechanically, "Sometimes."

"Ah, he is the victim of an hallucination," murmured the doctor.

"No, there is nothing whatever the matter with me, I tell you. Let me get out of here. I shall be as crazy as my nephew if I remain much longer. Ask my friends. They will all tell you that I am perfectly sane. Feel my pulse. You can see that I have no fever."

"Poor uncle!" murmured Francis. "He doesn't know that insanity is delirium unattended with fever."

"Yes," added the doctor, "if we could only give our patients a fever, we could cure every one of them."

M. Morlot sank back despairingly in his arm-chair. His nephew began to pace the floor.

"I am deeply grieved at my uncle's deplorable condition," he remarked feelingly, "but it is a great consolation to me to be able to intrust him to the care of a man like yourself. I have read your admirable treatise on monomania. It is the most valuable work of the kind that has appeared since the publication of the great Esquirol's *Treatise upon Mental*

Diseases. I know, moreover, that you are truly a father to your patients, so I will not insult you by commending M. Morlot to your special care. As for the compensation you are to receive, I leave that entirely to you."

As he spoke, he drew from his pocketbook a thousand franc note and laid it on the mantel. "I shall do myself the honor to call again sometime during the ensuing week. At what hour are your patients allowed to see visitors?"

"From twelve to two, only; but I am always at home. Good-day, sir."

"Stop him! stop him!" shouted Uncle Morlot. "Don't let him go. He is the one that is mad; I will tell you all about it."

"Calm yourself, my dear uncle," said Francis, starting towards the door. "I leave you in Dr. Auvray's care; he will soon cure you, I trust."

M. Morlot sprang up to intercept his nephew, but the doctor detained him.

"What a strange fatality!" cried the poor uncle. "He has not uttered a single senseless remark. If he would only rave as usual, you would soon see that I am not the one who is mad, but——"

Francis already had his hand on the door-knob, but turning suddenly, he retraced his steps as if he had forgotten something and, walking straight up to the doctor, said:

"My uncle's malady was not the only thing that brought me here."

"Ah," murmured M. Morlot, seeing a ray of hope, at last.

"You have a daughter," continued the young man.

"At last!" shouted the poor uncle. "You are a witness to the fact that he said: 'You have a daughter.'"

"Yes," replied the doctor, addressing Francis. "Will you kindly explain——"

"You have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray."

"There, there! didn't I tell you so?" cried the uncle.

"Yes," again replied the doctor.

"She was at Ems three months ago with her mother."

"Bravo! Bravo!" yelled M. Morlot.

"Yes," responded the physician for the third time.

M. Morlot rushed up to the doctor, and cried: "You are not the doctor, but a patient in the house."

"My friend, if you are not more quiet we shall have to give you a douche."

M. Morlot recoiled in terror. His nephew continued calmly:

"I love your daughter, sir; I have some hope that I am loved in return, and if her feelings have not changed since the month of September, I have the honor to ask her hand in marriage."

"Is it to Monsieur Francis Thomas that I have the honor of speaking?" inquired the doctor.

"The same, sir. I should have begun by telling you my name."

"Then you must permit me to say, sir, that you have been guilty of no unseemly haste——"

But just then the good doctor's attention was diverted by M. Morlot, who was rubbing his hands in a frenzied manner.

"What is the matter with you, my friend?" the doctor asked in his kind, fatherly way.

"Nothing, nothing! I am only washing my hands. There is something on them that troubles me."

"Show me what it is. I don't see anything."

"Can't you see it? There, there, between my fingers. I see it plainly enough."

"What do you see?"

"My nephew's money. Take it away, doctor. I'm an honest man; I don't want anything that belongs to anybody else."

While the physician was listening attentively to M. Morlot's first ravings, an extraordinary change took place in Francis. He became as pale as death, and seemed to be suffering terribly from cold, for his teeth chattered so violently that Dr. Auvray turned and asked what was the matter with him.

"Nothing," he replied. "She is coming, I hear her! It is joy, but it overpowers me. It seems to be falling on me and burying me beneath its weights like a snowdrift. Winter will be a dreary time for lovers. Oh, doctor, see what is the matter with my head!"

But his uncle rushed up to him, crying:

"Enough, enough! Don't rave so! I don't want people to think you mad. They will say I stole your reason from you. I'm an honest man. Doctor, look at my hands, examine my pockets, send to my house on the Rue Charonne.

Search the cupboard. Open all the drawers. You will find I have nothing that belongs to any other person."

Between his two patients the doctor was at his wits' end, when a door opened, and Claire came in to tell her father that breakfast was on the table.

Francis leaped up out of his chair, as if moved by a spring, but though his will prompted him to rush toward Mlle. Auvray, his flesh proved weak, and he fell back in his chair like lead. He could scarcely murmur the words:

"Claire, it is I! I love you. Will you——"

He passed his hand over his forehead. His pale face became a vivid scarlet. His temples throbbed almost to bursting; it seemed to him that an iron band was contracting more and more around his head, just above his brows. Claire, frightened nearly to death, seized both his hands; his skin was so dry, and his pulse so rapid that the poor girl was terrified. It was not thus that she had hoped to see him again. In a few minutes, a yellowish tinge appeared about his nostrils; nausea ensued, and Dr. Auvray recognized all the symptoms of a bilious fever.

"How unfortunate!" he said to himself. "If this fever had only attacked his uncle, it would have cured him!"

He rang. A servant appeared, and shortly afterward Mme. Auvray, who scarcely knew Francis, so greatly had he changed. It was necessary that the sick man should be got to bed without delay, and Claire relinquished her own pretty room to him. While they were installing him there, his uncle wandered excitedly about the parlor, tormenting the doctor with questions, embracing the sick man, seizing Mme. Auvray's hand and exclaiming wildly: "Save him, save him! He shall not die! I will not have him die! I forbid it. I have a right to. I am his uncle and guardian. If you do not care for him, people will say I killed him. You are witnesses to the fact that I ask for none of his property! I shall give all his possessions to the poor! Some water—please give me some water to wash my hands!" He was taken to the building occupied by the patients, where he became so violent that it was necessary to put him in a straight-jacket.

Mme. Auvray and her daughter nursed Francis with the tenderest care. Confined in the sick-room day and night, the mother and daughter spent most of their leisure time discussing the situation. They could not explain the

lover's long silence or his sudden reappearance. If he loved Claire, why had he left her in suspense for three dreary months? Why did he feel obliged to give his uncle's malady an excuse for presenting himself at Dr. Auvray's house? But if he had recovered from his infatuation, why did he not take his uncle to some other physician? There were plenty of them in Paris. Possibly he had believed himself cured of his folly until the sight of Claire undeceived him? But no, he had asked her father for her hand in marriage before he saw her again. But, in his delirium, Francis answered all or nearly all of these questions. Claire, bending tenderly over him, listened breathlessly to his every word, and afterward repeated them to her mother and to the doctor, who was not long in discovering the truth. They soon knew that he had lost his reason and under what circumstances; they even learned how he had been the innocent cause of his uncle's insanity. Fears of an entirely different nature now began to assail Mlle. Auvray. Was the terrible crisis which she had unwittingly brought about likely to cure his mental disorder? The doctor assured his daughter that a fever, under such circumstances, was almost certain to put an end to the insanity, but there is no rule without its exception, especially in medicine. And even if he seemed to be cured, was there not danger of a recurrence of the malady?

"So far as I am concerned, I am not in the least afraid," said Claire, smiling sadly. "I am the cause of all his troubles. Therefore, it is my duty to console him. After all, his madness consists merely in continually asking my hand. There will be no need of doing that after I become his wife, so we really have nothing to fear. The poor fellow lost his reason through his excessive love; so cure him; my dear father, but not entirely. Let him remain insane enough to love me as much as I love him!"

"We will see," replied Dr. Auvray. "Wait until this fever passes off. If he seems ashamed of having been demented, if he appears gloomy, or melancholy after his recovery, I cannot vouch for him; if, on the contrary, he remembers his temporary aberration of mind without mortification or regret—if he speaks of it without any reserve, and if he is not averse to seeing the persons who nursed him through his illness, there is not the slightest reason to apprehend a return of the malady."

On the 25th of December, Francis fortified by a cup of chicken-broth, and half the yolk of a soft boiled egg, sat up in bed, and without the slightest hesitancy or mortification, and in a perfectly lucid manner, gave the history of the past three months without any emotion save that of quiet joy. Claire and Mme. Auvray wept as they listened to him; the doctor pretended to be taking notes, or rather to be writing under dictation, but something besides ink fell on the paper. When the story ended, the convalescent added, by way of conclusion:

"And now on this, the 25th day of December, I say to my good doctor, and much loved father—Dr. Auvray, whose street and number I shall never again forget—'Sir, you have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray, whom I met at Ems, with her mother. I love her; she has proved that she loves me in return, and if you have no fears that I will become insane again, I have the honor to ask her hand in marriage.'"

The doctor was so deeply affected that he could only bow his head in token of assent, but Claire put her arms around the sick man's neck and kissed him tenderly on the forehead. I am sure I should desire no better response under like circumstances.

That same day, M. Morlot; who had become much more quiet and tractable, and who had long since been released from the bondage of a straight-jacket, rose about eight o'clock in the morning, as usual. On getting out of bed, he picked up his slippers, examined and re-examined them inside and out, then handed them to a nurse for inspection, begging him to see for himself that they contained no thirty thousand francs. Until positively assured of this fact he would not consent to put them on. Then he carefully shook each of his garments out of the window, but not until after he had searched every fold and pocket in them. After his toilet was completed, he called for a pencil, and wrote on the walls of his chamber:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's money, nor anything that is his."

Dr. Auvray is confident of his ability to cure him, but it will take time. It is in the summer and autumn that physicians are most successful in their endeavors to cure insanity.

SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

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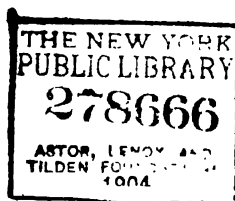
THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous fields of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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HE Lady of the Rocks:

A Seaside Tale, by Francis A. Schneider. Illustrations by Mabel L. Humphrey*



WAIST high in water, with a badly sprained ankle and a disabled and useless wrist, filling him with excruciating agony, Ferris Wilmot, artist, clung with one hand to a seaweed-covered rock, while with the toe of his uninjured

***Written for Short Stories.**

foot, he propped himself against a submerged boulder, to keep from slipping still further into the sea. Urged on by an artistic impulse and the hope of reaching a point from which he could obtain a good view for a lowtide sketch, he had essayed to leap from one slippery rock to another, with the distressing results described.

To the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, were rocks, great and small, heaped up in irregular masses, from the water's edge, where they lay, now that the tide was out, damp and green with clinging seaweed, to the margin of the sparsely grassed downs. Far away to the south lay white sand dunes, to the west stretched the blue ocean, and above all shone the June sun. The nearest living creature—except a flock of sand-pipers—was represented by a moving speck, away long the shore, and whether it was a man or a woman, coming toward, or going from him, Wilmot could not determine. He was powerless to help himself, and the tide was rising. He could feel it creeping up his body as he clung desperately to his slippery support. If he relaxed the tension on his hand and foot and let himself go, was the water deep enough at this point, to drown him he wondered.

"I suppose the only thing for me to do is to hang on here till the tide comes in and carries me off," he groaned. "Well, it's my own fault," with a sudden accession of self-reproach, "what the devil did I want with trying to perform feats that only a native accustomed to these beastly rocks from infancy, could possibly accomplish."

The distant speck had increased in size. It was evidently coming toward him. He could see now that it was a woman, and by the ease with which she made her way along the uneven shore, he concluded that she was a "native." She was still too far off to hail, and Wilmot watched her with anxious eyes, fearing that she might diverge from her course and turn away across the downs. But she came on quite steadily—a tall, slender woman, wearing a simple summer dress, and wearing it with a grace that led him to discard his first conclusion, for surely no "native" would be likely to array herself in a shirt-waist that fitted like this girl's, or a skirt that his quick eye instantly informed him, hung in the mode. She had evidently not seen him, though

now within hailing distance, and was making up the shore when the young man shouted desperately.

"Hullo! will you be so kind as to come here a moment?"

The girl paused, looked around and caught sight of him.

"I am hurt!" he shouted by way of explanation.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and hurried toward him.

As she drew near, Wilmot, in spite of his pain, noted that she was beautiful, with rare coloring of hair and complexion, and exquisitely moulded features; and, as he looked at her, he suddenly became aware that he had seen her before.

"What is the matter?" she asked, her hazel eyes full of concern.

"I fell in, trying to jump out to that big rock, which is now nearly covered with water. I have sprained my ankle and disabled my wrist and am helpless to get out of this awkward position without aid. So I took the liberty of calling upon you. I hope you will pardon me," he concluded with a smile that ended in a grimace of pain.

"It would have been unpardonable if you had not called me," she replied. "We must manage, somehow, to get you away from the water, and then I will go for assistance. The tide will be up to your neck in ten minutes, if you stay here."

"But you are not strong enough to help me."

She smiled. "The difficulty will be to get purchase on these slippery rocks. Now, make ready to help yourself as much as you can."

Just how it was managed, neither of them could ever tell, but Wilmot, giving what assistance he could, found himself being drawn higher up on the rocks, and presently sank down with a groan of pain, but with his body quite clear of the water. The girl looked down at him with an added tinge of color in her clear cheeks and her eyes aglow, but otherwise undisturbed by the exertion.

"You are in great pain," she said, sympathetically.

"Oh, I shall be all right in a minute. But I am awfully afraid that you have overtaxed your strength."

"Overtaxed my strength!" she exclaimed, "Oh, no; I am like iron. You will have to make one more effort when you feel equal to it, and let me help you a little higher up on the rocks, where the tide cannot possibly reach you, while I

go for assistance. The place where you are now will soon be under water."

"It is perfectly awful," with a look of chagrin, "for me to trouble you so, but there seems to be no other way."

"There is no other way," she responded, with a smile.

Creeping laboriously along the rocks, where that was possible, or rising to an erect position and leaning heavily on the girl's shoulder for support, Wilmot progressed by slow degrees into the shadow of a great rock. Here, she did what she could to make him comfortable, bringing wet seaweed to lay under his injured ankle and binding some of the same cool, wet stuff about his limp and burning wrist.

"Tell me where you are stopping," she asked at last, when this was done. "I had better go directly there and get a conveyance for you."

"I am boarding at Rockville, with Mrs. Smithers," he answered, "but that is fully four miles away. I can't think of letting you take such a journey."

"I may possibly meet some one on the road whom I can get to take you to Rockville—in any case don't worry—I shall be back very soon," she said, encouragingly.

He watched her hurry away over the rocks and disappear from sight as she reached the downs. A filmy bit of cambric, blown from the direction in which she passed, was wafted fitfully toward him. His eyes followed it eagerly. Presently a more energetic breeze caught the cobwebby thing and puffed it directly into his hand.

"This must be her handkerchief," he thought, and turned it about to see if there was a name in the corner. "'K. O.,' and what may that stand for?" but at this point in his conjecturing, being seized by a violent spasm of pain, he thrust the foolish thing into his pocket and fell to commiserating himself. Slowly the moments passed. The wash of the sea grew continually louder as the tide came in. Wilmot craned his neck painfully to see how high the water had risen, and found that the rocks upon which he had fallen were quite submerged. His sufferings had now reached a climax and he leaned back wearily and closed his eyes.

Presently he heard voices behind him and in a moment more the girl appeared, accompanied by a man whom he recognized as the Swede who worked in his landlady's garden.

"I met this man coming from Rockville and got him to bring his wagon across the downs for you," she explained. "He will drive you home."

"I can never thank you for what you have done," Wilmot said to her, after he had, with great difficulty, been assisted into the wagon.

"Never mind the thanks," she replied. "I hope that your injuries are not really serious and that you will soon recover. Good-bye."

"But surely, you are not going in this way," he remonstrated. "You will, at least, get into the trap and be driven home."

"Oh, no; my home is quite out of your route, and it would only prolong your agony, if you were to take me there first. Get home as quickly as you can and have yourself attended to," she responded, beginning to walk away.

"It is too bad!" he cried, "I have given you so much trouble. And am I to know you only as—as a good Samaritan!"

"That will do very well," she replied, looking back over her shoulder and smiling. "Good-bye!" and she was gone.

"Do you know who that young lady is?" Wilmot asked the Swede.

But the man explained that he had lived in the neighborhood only a few weeks and knew no one. Mrs. Smithers, as Wilmot knew, had but recently come to the place, and it was useless to depend upon her for information regarding the inhabitants of the region, or their summer guests. Mingled with the agony of the long drive home, was the tormenting thought that the girl's name and abode were likely to remain a mystery and that when he was well enough to go forth and seek her, as seek he would, he had not the slightest clue to her whereabouts.

"Unless this proves to be one," he groaned, touching the handkerchief that lay in his breast pocket. There was some comfort to be derived from its possession, and he drew it forth and weakly lifted it to his lips.

Four weeks—four weary, tiresome weeks, in which the sun shone and the sea sparkled and the country looked its best—was Wilmot laid up. He had come to this remote New

England coast, away from all possible distractions, on purpose to work; and now, in the early part of his stay, just when he had begun to feel in touch with his surroundings, this disaster had come upon him. His spirit chafed and burned as he felt that the summer was slipping by and that a great part of what he had planned to do was becoming daily more impossible of accomplishment. Besides this, there was a strong underlying desire to meet again the owner of the cambric handkerchief, whose lovely face, with a persistency that was almost painful, kept rising before his mental vision and claiming for itself not only present consideration, but a sort of retrospective recognition that he racked his brains to account for. The thought that she might leave the neighborhood before he had an opportunity to see her again, was a tragic consideration that he could not bear to dwell upon.

"But whether I hunt her up here, or have to go to Kamtchatka to look for her, I will find The Lady of The Rocks, sometime," he soliloquized, with stern resolve. And one day, after he had begun to go about as usual, he did find her on the shore, not far from the scene of his accident. She wore a white dress and sat in the shadow of a boulder, reading. Wilmot hurried with a recklessness quite inconsistent with his recent experiences, across the intervening space, and stood before her, his face glowing with the triumph of successful quest. She looked up brightly and said:

"I'm glad to see that you are able to be about again."

"Thank you. I'm all right now and am so glad to have found you. I know I didn't make my gratitude clear, the day you pulled me out of the water, and I've been longing to see you and tell you how much I appreciate your kind offices on that occasion."

Wilmot was extremely good to look upon, as he stood, tall and straight and stalwart, gazing down upon her with earnest eyes. Perhaps this truth was suddenly borne in upon The Lady of The Rocks, for there was unconscious approval in the glance that lingered upon him for a moment, as she said with a blush:

"Oh, indeed, you were quite grateful enough. Don't exaggerate my little services. Any other Samaritan would have been as good."

"I beg to differ with you there. Besides, there were no other Samaritans on the route and probably would not have

been till long after I had been washed out to sea and eaten by the sharks."

The girl laughed—a very pretty laugh, low and soft—but made no comment. "Would you mind," he ventured, "if I sat down here in the shade and rested a moment. My ankle is not quite strong yet."

"Certainly not," and she made room beside her in the shadow.

"It is a singular thing," he said, as he dropped into the place, "that I should be haunted by the belief that I have seen you before under very different circumstances."

She turned her eyes upon him with a wondering, retrospective gaze.

"I am sure never saw you until the day of your accident."

"Perhaps it is only a chance resemblance," with a perplexed frown. "But I was so sure"—studying her face intently.

The girl shook her head slightly and looked away toward the distant sand dunes.

"Do you remember having lost anything the day you—rescued me?" asked Wilmot.

"Yes; I lost a handkerchief."

"Then I think I found it. But you must identify it, before I can possibly give it up."

"That is easy. The initials 'K. O.' are embroidered in one corner."

"Are they your initials?"



"Of course," she laughed and held out her hand for the handkerchief.

"I suppose it would be great presumption if I were to ask what 'K. O.' stand for," he ventured.

"I think it would," she said, glancing at him and then away at the sand dunes again.

"Will you sit in that position for a moment! Your face is coming back to me—I know now where I have seen you!" he exclaimed, with sudden triumph.

"Where?"

"At the corner of Thirty-third street and Madison avenue, New York. Through the window of the Eatons' carriage. Miss Alice Eaton sat beside you."

"She flashed about, half startled, her face full of animation.

"And you know Miss Eaton?" she queried.

"Very well."

"She is a dear friend of mine. We went to college together. How strange that you should have seen me with her, and that you should have remembered my face all this time. It is a year and a half since I visited the Eatons. I stayed with them a week, just before they sailed for Europe."

"Some faces are easily remembered," he said. "Did Miss Eaton ever happen to mention a hard-working artist named Ferris Wilmot?"

"Yes, several times. But you—are you Mr. Wilmot?"

"I have the present good fortune to be that individual."

She looked at him radiantly.

"I am so glad. I saw some of your pictures, Mr. Wilmot, when I was in New York."

"And how did you like them?" he asked, thinking how greatly animation added to the wonderful charm of her face.

"Very much. Everybody does."

"Does everybody?" he laughed.

"Of course, everybody with taste does. I should hardly have expected to find you in this lonely out-of-the-way place," she went on. "I had an idea from what Miss Eaton said, that you were rather fond of life and gayety."

"I am; but I like lonely, out-of-the-way places, too. They are conducive to work, and work is my occupation nine-tenths of time. But you—don't you find it lonely here?"

"No; I am not lonely. There is plenty for me to do.

Besides, the amusements, such as rowing, walking and sailing, are just what I like. I am always happy out of doors."

"Do you remain here all summer?"

"All summer," she replied with a half smile.

"Now, that my identity has been properly established, and we find that we are both friends of Miss Eaton's, do you think that there would be any impropriety in my asking what 'K. O.' stand for?"

"I think not," she replied, smiling. "They stand for Kathleen O'Neil." She rose, "I am going home now, and shall have to hurry in order to be in time for tea."

"May I walk home with you, Miss O'Neil?"

"I couldn't think of letting you. It is a long way and you would only overtax your ankle. Good-bye, Mr. Wilmot," and she held out her hand to him.

He felt himself dismissed, but persisted eagerly.

"You will let me have the pleasure of calling upon you when—my ankle is strong enough to admit of my walking so far."

She seemed irresolute, and a thoughtful frown gathered between her lovely eyes. But in an instant it cleared away and she looked up frankly into his face.

"I am afraid I can't ask you to call, Mr. Wilmot, though I should like to, very much. But it has been a great pleasure to meet you, both on your own and on Miss Eaton's account."

Wilmot felt rebuffed, and yet was sure that no rebuff had been intended; and he said, with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"Then I am not likely to meet you again," and waited, watching her face earnestly.

"Perhaps we may meet again. I am often on the shore and you come here sometimes. Good-bye," and she hastened away.

He watched her out of sight, feeling half disappointed, half pleased. She had refused to let him call for reasons which he was sure were good and sufficient, yet she held out the hope that he might see her again—indeed, what she said, might have been construed into an invitation. It was unconventional, and not exactly what might have been expected from a friend of Alice Eaton's—who was rather a straightlaced, matter-of-fact little body—but it was all right, he concluded, as coming from *The Lady of The Rocks*. And at this point in his meditations he turned homeward.

Tom Brady's fish house was one of a dozen perched on the steep bank of an inlet, formed partly by a massive breakwater which interposed a semi-circular barrier to the encroachments of the ocean, and partly by a natural depression in the shore. The breakwater had been built for the purpose of providing a safe and commodious moorage, where schooners could be loaded with the granite brought down from the inland quarries of the region; and not, as some of the fishermen had grown to believe, for the better defense of the fish-houses against the onslaughts of the sea. As a matter of fact, they stood on their present site years before the heavy structure was thought of; but its presence was a great protection and there was no more desirable haven for fishing boats for miles along the coast, than Jones' Cove.

On the little platform in front of his door sat Tom Brady. Tall, thin and muscular was he, with a brown, unshaven face and kindly eyes, set in a multitude of wrinkles, a little faded as to color, as if the sun had bleached them, but as attentive and far-seeing as they had ever been. His clothes, about which hung the odor of fish and in places an encrustment of fish scales, were worn and weather beaten. His battered old hat lay on the platform beside him and a cool breeze blowing in from the ocean, stirred the iron-gray locks on the old man's forehead. He was mending nets and his brown, knotted hands drove the shuttle in and out among the coarse meshes with swiftness and precision. Below him and beyond the shadow in which he sat, lay the shining water of the cove, and beyond that again, across the gray sea wall, stretched the blue ocean, calm and placid.

"You are very busy this morning, Tom," said Wilmot, coming up on the platform behind the old fisherman.

"Wall, yes, I be, some'at. I ain't seen ye for mor'n a month an' ye uster come often—war uv ye b'en?"

"I fell on the rocks and hurt myself the other day, and have been laid up."

"Whew! that was bad! Ye ain't b'en a-paintin' sence, I s'pose?"

"Very little," gloomily, "I've lost a lot of time."

"Wall, I s'pose ye wanten go on paintin' my pictur', don't ye?" with a tolerant chuckle as though he were speaking to a child about one of its playthings.

"Yes," was the reply, "I should like to. The light is

just right this morning. I've brought the canvas and with your permission will go to work—oh, you can't tell anything about it yet—it's scarcely begun," as Tom peered curiously over his shoulder at the sketch.

"Oh, ain't it? Dunno much 'bout picturs, it moight be a cow, or a man in a bo-at—or a fish, for all I knows," with an indescribable inward chuckle, suggestive of great merriment and good humor.

"It will come out all right, never fear," said Wilmot, settling himself on an empty, upturned keg.

"Wisht I hed on my good clothes," put in Tom, regretfully.

"Your clothes are all right. You look well against the dark doorway with your nets and barrels and boat hooks and things showing dimly inside. I'm going over to Cod Rocks next week, Tom, and I want you to take me in your boat," concluded Wilmot, by way of diversion.

"What be ye goin' thar fur?" regarding the young man curiously.

"Why, isn't there lots to see over there?" dabbing on color.

"Nothin' but them blasted rocks," explained Tom, spitting carefully over the side of the platform into the water.

"But they say the surf is splendid over there," pursued Wilmot.

"Wall," meditatively, "Cod Rocks is a good 'nough place, but 'tain't no better'n this fur surf. Why, here on a stormy day ye kin see the waves bustin' out thar on the stones an' throwin' up spray fifty feet'n more. No, no—ye don't need to go to Cod Rocks to see surf. Jist wait till the September gales comes, ye'll hev all ye want'n more Talkin' o' rocks," he continued, "w'en my little gal uster come home from school, w'en she war smaller, she'd tell yarn on yarn 'bout 'em—how the angle uv incidence, as she calls it, come down from the North Pole an' druv them rocks up in a heap-like, on the shore. But I dunno wot the angle uv incidence is, no more'n the babe unborn—couldn't git it through my head, though the gal tried to make it clar. Mebe you know," with a wistful look in his bright eyes.

Wilmot tried to explain and the old man listened eagerly and with a gentle shaking of his head.

"Guess I be too old to l'arn. My gal, she's l'arn't it all," proudly. "She knows 'nough for me an' her an' her mother

Moight's well stick ter my fish," with chuckle. "But she knows it all, my little gal does."

There was an indescribable tenderness and thoughtfulness in his face as he spoke, that touched Wilmot's heart.

"Your little girl is very clever, isn't she?" he said, with much deference and gentleness.

"Bless ye!" his face brightening. "She's the cleverest I ever seen—an' jist as fond an' dootiful to me an' her mother, as ef we was clever, too."

"But that is not strange," responded Wilmot. "How could she help being fond of you when you have done so much for her?"

"I dunno, I dunno," he answered. "She's diff'rent from us an' she moightn't be. She's the best gal livin'!"

"I'm sure she's a fine girl," responded Wilmot, warmly.

"Ye, wanter go out'n help haul mackerel, some mornin'? They look moighty pretty in the nets, all a-shinin'. Ye'd like to make a pictur' uv 'em, p'raps."

Wilmot had frequently sailed with Tom in his double dory—which bore the somewhat inappropriate title of "Winged Clipper"—before his accident. But never had he gone in the early dawn to see the mackerel hauled; and he accepted the invitation with enthusiasm.

In the course of the weeks that followed, Miss O'Neil and Wilmot met several times, always on some part of the rocky shore, where the girl seemed to spend much of her time, reading and writing and sometimes making an attempt to sketch. Always bright and responsive when their talk hinged on general topics, she avoided markedly, all reference to her personal affairs. Her reserve piqued Wilmot, though he admitted his unreasonableness in feeling annoyed. "She need not make it so very clear that she regards me merely as a chance acquaintance," he thought.

"Do you know," he said to her one day, "I have grown to associate you inseparably with this bit of coast. Shall I tell you what I called you to myself, before I knew your name?"

"What?" she asked, with an amused look in her eyes.

"The Lady of the Rocks."

She laughed. "It was an odd name to give me."

"Not so odd. You seem to harmonize with the scene, somehow. I don't know a lovelier bit of coast than this."

"It can be a very cold and cruel bit of coast," looking out at the placid sea. "Many lives have been lost on the hidden rocks and reefs that lie out there. You should see it in winter."

"Have you seen it in winter?" he asked, wonderingly.

"Many times," she replied and was silent.

One afternoon, in the middle of September, Wilmot, who had been sketching, some miles inland, setting out on his return walk through the woods, turned into an old, disused wagon road and lost his way. For half an hour he rambled on, hoping to find the highroad. Coming to a little elevation at last, he saw the ocean lying directly before him, and between him and it, standing in an enclosure that skirted the highroad, was a small brown-painted cottage with a gabled front. At the back of the house, an apple orchard grew on the hillside that sloped away to the sea; and the front garden was gay with Fall flowers. As Wilmot approached, he saw that there was a pump in one corner of the picket fence, with a drinking cup turned upside down upon the top, and being thirsty, he turned in at the little gate to get some water.

Down in the orchard, a woman was picking up apples, and the sound of the pump handle, as Wilmot plied it, must have caught her ear, for she glanced round suddenly, and, gathering up her apron, which was full of early greenings, came over to him. She was a tall, stout woman, with curly hair and a rosy, good-natured face, and she regarded him with a broad smile as she came.

"I hope you'll excuse my trespassing," said the young man. "I was awfully thirsty and your well looked tempting."

"Sure you're welcome. There's many a wan comes here for wather. Mabe ye'd like some apples, too. 'Tis shwate they are," and she put three or four into Wilmot's outstretched hands.

"Thank you," he said. "You have a cozy place here."

"'Tis cozy, but it's very owld. If me husband was here, he could tell you manny tales about it. Sure, by the luk of the things ye do be carryin', I'm afther thinking ye're the artis' gentleman Tom was telling me about."

"Tom! Do you mean Tom Brady?"

"I do that."

'And is this Tom Brady's place and you are his wife?'

"Yis, faikes. And he's shpoke av ye often."

"Tom and I are good friends, Mrs. Brady. I made his acquaintance the very first day I came to this region, last June. Many a sail and many a talk we've had together. I am painting a picture of him and his fish-house, you know?"

"I do," said Mrs. Brady, "and 'tis blame to him that he do be afther wearin' his owld clothes to have it tuk in. And will ye step in and rest a bit—sure ye must be tired luggin' all thim paintin' things."

"Some other day, if you will allow me, I shall be glad to come," he responded, with a cordiality that won Mrs. Brady's heart, "but to-day, I must hurry back to Rockville."

"Rockville is it! Sure it's the good six mile from here. I haven't been there this manny a year. But come in next time ye're passin' an' have a sup o' tea an' a bite. It's glad I'll be to see ye," she said heartily.

Wilmot bade her good-bye and she stood and watched 'im down the road, her bare arms resting on the wooden rail of the picket fence.

The last of September had come, warm and rich in color, with a sharpness in the air at night and morning that made the sunshine doubly welcome. Letters had reached Wilmot that made his early return to New York imperative, and yet he lingered on, dreading to make the final wrench which meant, not only separation from the beauty of the sea and sky and woods and the free outdoor life he loved, but far more—the relinquishment of those chance meetings with *The Lady of The Rocks*, that had now become of vital moment to him.

The sketch of Tom Brady was finished, though not to the satisfaction of the old man, whose opinion that he looked like a "tramp," and that the fish-house "oughter ben red up a-fore the pictur' was took," was expressed in straightforward terms that could not be misunderstood. Wilmot fastened it up with his sketching paraphernalia, one day and escaping from the fire of Tom's criticism, walked along the downs that skirted the shore, for about a mile, when the figure, for which he was ever on the lookout, caught his eye. She had been reading, but the book now lay in her lap beneath her folded hands, and her eyes were turned seaward. He could see the clear curve of her cheek and the fringe of black lashes above it as he drew nearer.

"So you are here!" he exclaimed. "I have not seen you for so long that I began to think that you had gone away."

She looked around with a start and a tinge of added color.

"I've been too busy to indulge in my usual rambles and my loafings on the shore—soon the weather will be too cold for loafing anywhere," she added with a sigh.

"But you will be away by that time, won't you?"

"It is not my present intention to go. You know that my home is here, don't you?"

"You never said so," he exclaimed reproachfully. "I certainly had an idea that you were here only for the summer."

"Your imagination wove the fabric of that fallacy; I did not tell you so," she laughed.

"No; and there was no reason why you should have told me, only I am interested in what concerns you and—"

"Have you a sketch there?" she asked. "Won't you show it to me?"

"It's a sketch of Tom Brady and his fish-house."

"A sketch of—Tom Brady. Please let me see it."

Wilmot untied the canvas and set it out on the rocks before her. She sat looking at it a moment, a musing smile on her lips.

"It is very good," she said at last, "and very like him."

"Then you know Tom?"

"He is—" pausing and looking up quickly into Wilmot's face—"I could hardly have lived here as much as I have without knowing him," she concluded with an odd little smile.

"Tom and I are excellent friends, and as a particular proof of his friendliness he has taken me out several times to help haul his mackerel nets. To-morrow morning I go with him again."

"That is indeed a mark of esteem," responded the girl. "Did he ever speak to you about his 'little girl'?"

"His 'little gal'! he has told me volumes about her."

"He is very fond of her," she remarked, stooping to place the picture in a better light.

"What is she really like?" asked Wilmot.

"Oh, she is well enough in her way, I suppose. Her life at college brought her into contact with cultivated people. She is adaptable and profited by her observations of the manners and customs of polite society."

"It must have been rather a strain on Tom's bank account to send her to college, I should think."

"It was. But he and Mrs Brady made all kinds of sacrifices—spent the savings of years on the girl's education. It was the object of their lives—as it is with most New England parents—to give their child every advantage in this way."

"But the mother cannot, strictly speaking, be called a New Englander," said Wilmot, thinking of Mrs. Brady's brogue.

"No; but she has lived here long enough to have imbibed New England ideas."

"And what does the girl do, now that she is educated?"

"She lives at home with her father and mother—they cannot bear her to leave them—and writes. Nothing great—she will never make a name for herself—but she earns a fair income."

"That's interesting."

"And yet; she is in an anomalous position. She has little opportunity to mingle with the class to which by education and intellect, she belongs; and she has quite grown beyond her associates in her own station. So you see that her social intercourse is somewhat limited."

"It's a difficult position," Wilmot remarked; and then, as if he had supplied the solution of the problem of Miss Brady's life, he concluded, "Why on earth doesn't she marry and get away from it all."

"You are a logician!" she exclaimed, laughing. "And will you tell me who among the quarrymen and the fishermen and the little farmers of the region, would be best suited for the matrimonial alliance you suggest? 'Marry and get away from it all, indeed!'"

"I don't want her to marry any of the people you mention," repudiated Wilmot, smiling at the girl's warmth, "I was merely suggesting a solution of her difficulties. Isn't it possible that she may sometime meet the fortunate individual, who, combining the proper amount of intelligence and breeding, with the proper amount of learning, may commend himself to her good graces?"

"Perhaps," she replied gravely, ignoring his bantering tone, "but it would be cruelly hard for her parents to feel that she had gone quite out of their sphere. Besides, such

a man would hesitate about marrying a girl of her birth and antecedents."

"Not if he loved her—"

"Nonsense!" she interrupted, incredulously, "Make it your own case."

"My own case—I—well, I wouldn't like to answer off hand. But I should prefer not to have Tom Brady for a father-in-law, much as I like and respect him. It would be incongruous. But luckily," he concluded gaily, "I won't be called upon to make a decision. And now, don't let us talk any more about Miss Brady, I want to talk about you."

"About me! What is there to say about me?" she asked.

"Everything that's pleasant."

"Oh, you are flattering me," glancing quickly into his smiling face, "though there is nothing specific in your remark."

"Shall I make it specific?" moving a little nearer.

"Better not. It would make the flattery more palpable."

"But I am really serious and am truthfully stating my impression of you."

"You know so little about me that you are qualified to form an impression," she laughed.

"But I know quite a lot about you and have guessed more."

"What have you guessed?" with a flash of surprise.

"Nothing extraordinary," he replied, catching her look and wondering, momentarily. "But I won't tell you; you were cynical about my first proposition. May I change the subject to a less agreeable one and say something about myself?"

"Certainly—and indeed, it will be more interesting."

"You are very polite and unselfish to say so."

His eyes were smiling still, as he spoke, and there was such an air of comradeship about him, that a sudden change to gravity and earnestness of face and manner, seemed to disconcert her, for she started visibly.

"I am going away in a few days," he began.

"I thought you meant to stay through October?" she said.

Was it the breeze, or the quickened beating of her heart, that fluttered the light folds of her shawl she had drawn about her shoulders?

"But I can't go," he pursued, "without telling you what befell me the first day I met you. Can you guess?"

"You—you sprained your ankle and broke your wrist."

"Oh, those were minor incidents, compared with the other thing that happened. This time, I won't leave you to guess, I lost my heart."

"You"—she began and started to her feet.

"Kathleen, I love you—will you be my wife?" he broke in, hurriedly.

"Please don't say any more!" she pleaded, with a little catch in her voice.

"Yes, I will," he insisted, "I will say it all. I have meant to from the beginning," snatching her hand. "I have loved you from the first moment I saw you that day you pulled me out of the water—I have thought of you every moment since——"

"But I can't listen to you, indeed I can't!" she interrupted, in distress, trying to withdraw her hand.

"Why can't you?"

"Please let go my hand."

"Not until you tell me why you can't listen to me," he said, looking down at her with his heart in his eyes.

"There are reasons why it will be best for both of us, for you to forget all about me—reasons why it will be impossible for me to be your wife."

"And what may the reasons be, Kathleen? There could be only two that I should regard as sufficient. One that you love some one else—the other that you do not like me well enough even to consider the matter—and somehow," stooping to look into the girl's drooping face, "somehow, I am presumptuous enough to think that you do—and thinking so, I am not going to be put off with—'reasons'."

She shrunk away, putting out her hand as if striving to interpose a barrier between them and saying:

"I am sorry—oh, very sorry to pain you—but you must not speak to me any more on the subject."

"But I will speak more on the subject," persisted he; "and speak and speak until you are obliged to hear me. I tell you I love you, Kathleen, and I believe in my soul that you are not indifferent to me. Do you think that I will let any girlish fancy of yours come between us—or turn me from my purpose," he cried, passionately.

"I am not a woman to beswayed by girlish fancies and I tell you that what you ask can never be. You will know what makes it impossible—later on—and—understand me—better. I beg of you leave me now. Go back to New York—see Alice Eaton, she has returned—talk to her of me—she knows me well and is fond of me. She has visited me here."

"It will not be necessary for me to consult Miss Eaton on the subject. Ah, Kathleen—be reasonable—be human!"

"I am reasonable and I am trying to be humane, if not human," she said, with a little laugh that sounded almost like a sob. "No," as he would have taken her hand again. "Do as I ask, I beseech you. Go away—back to New York and forget all about 'The Lady of The Rocks.' Now go!" with a passionate little gesture of dismissal.

He looked steadily for a moment into her beautiful eyes and read in them such an earnest appeal for obedience, that, after a moment, he said gently:

"I'll go now; but if you think I am one whit shaken in my purpose, you are mistaken. You shall have time to consider—two weeks, if you insist—and God knows how generous I am, when I offer to wait so long—but I will have an answer then—and if it is not the one I want, I will ask and ask again until it is. Good-bye, for a while, Kathleen."

And he went away and left her standing with her face turned seaward.

Noiselessly as a ghost, Tom Brady's boat glided out of the breakwater, into the dim, white-capped sea and bent low under the stress of the freshening wind, as her skipper headed her northward. A tinge of rose flushed the eastern horizon, but the sky overhead, with its broken masses of flying clouds, looked dark and threatening.

"I reckon ye won't see no sunrise this mornin'," said Tom to Wilmot, who sat amidships.

"Doesn't look like it now. How about that rudder, Tom—do you think it will stand the strain of such a sea?"

"Oh, it's all right. That thar splice hes b'en onto the rudder sence the y'ar one. It never give away yit," responded the old man, with one of his odd inward chuckles. "It's safe enough. Mind now—she's goin' ter luff."

Wilmot changed his seat and the boom swung over, the

boat careened on the crest of a wave and forged ahead more briskly than ever.

"Thar'll be a nor'easter on afore noon," looking about him and seeming to sniff it in the air. "We won't hev no more'n time to make the mackerel nets an' back afore thar's a big blow."

The little vessel sped away through the ever freshening wind and the day settled down dark and sunless.

It was eleven o'clock and some one was knocking at the door of the brown cottage—knocking hard and fast. Mrs. Brady heard it, even above the uproar that the wind was making outside and responded immediately.

"Somethin's happened to yer man's bo-at," said a breathless voice, "an' she's driftin' on the rocks off Pelter's P'int."

"Glory be to God! what's this yer tellin' me, Ezra—me man's boat!"

"They sent me to tell ye," said the boy. "Mike O'Connell an' Sam Brown an' John Harvey's put off in a bo-at from the cove—but it's small chance they'll git thar in time."

Without hat or shawl Mrs. Brady hastened out, the wild wind catching the strands of her curling gray hair and blowing them about her frightened face. Breathlessly she followed the panting Ezra, learning as they went the few scant details known at the cove of the "Clipper's" untoward plight. No one had seen her approach, all the fishermen being busy with their boats inside the breakwater. But it had suddenly occurred to one of them that Tom Brady's boat was not in the cove, that he had gone out before dawn to haul his mackerel nets, and that in such a sea as was raging it would be an almost impossible matter for the "Clipper" to effect a safe landing anywhere along that rocky coast. Going to a point from whence he could look out across the walls of the breakwater, this man had seen her, helpless, disabled, drifting swiftly with the wind and the tide upon the jagged belt of rocks that lay out to sea about two hundred yards off Pelton's Point.

"Twas the broke rudder done it," wailed Mrs. Brady. "An' manny's the time I've axed Tom to buoy a new wan—an' him that stubborn an' said there was loock in the shplice—an' the garrul away in Bostin this minute. Phat'll I do?"

They had now reached a portion of the shore from which

the "Clipper" was visible. She was drifting helplessly, beaten this way and that by the fury of the wind and waves and carried surely and swiftly upon the reef, which at low tide was quite bare, but the position of which was now made evident by the great waves that rushed in and broke upon it.

"My God!" cried the woman, and sped on to gain a better point of vantage. On the shore directly opposite the reef, half a dozen men were gathered, and as the terror-stricken woman approached, some of them stretched out kindly hands to help her upon the great, flat rock where they stood, and one of them said:

"Don't take on, Mis. Brady. Thar's some goin' out in a bo-at to try an' help yer man, an' ma'be they kin save him yit. They'll be out o' the breakwater in a minute. But it's a hard sea!"

"O wirra, wirra, me pore Tom and the artis' gentleman, and it's a corpse they'll be sendin' back to New York, I'm thinkin'!"

The men in the doomed boat were waving to the group on the shore, and Mrs. Brady, with streaming eyes, plucked off her apron and waved it in return. By this time the rescuing party had cleared the breakwater, and their dory was floundering in the mighty seas, two hundred yards from the drifting vessel. Wilmot and the old fisherman were divesting themselves of their coats and shoes and the watchers divined that it was their intention to take what was now the only possible chance for their lives, and that they waited only for the dory to draw a little nearer before leaping overboard and striving to breast the fearful force of the sea. Meanwhile the "Clipper" was driven steadily onward to her doom.

"They're leavin' it too long—too long," muttered one of the fishermen, shaking his head.

At that moment the two men stood up, side by side, on the "Clipper's" gunwale and side by side, without an instant's hesitation, sprang into the sea. Mrs. Brady hid her face and the men about her grew a shade paler as the two figures disappeared from sight. Presently they rose again, close together, struggling manfully to make some headway in the direction of the dory. How slowly it crept toward them; how the men labored at their oars; how quickly Tom Brady seemed to tire. That his strength was giving out was evident,

even before Wilmot who, with vigorous strokes, was holding his own against wind and tide, went to his assistance.

"They be as good as drowneded a'ready!" exclaimed the man who had spoken before, "The artis' can't keep hisself an' Tom afloat in that sea."

Supporting Tom, who was now unable to help himself, Wilmot could make little or no headway. It was a deadly struggle barely to keep the heads of both above water, and he was fast becoming exhausted. The dory was now within fifty feet of them, and one of her crew essayed to fling a line to the drowning men. Twice, thrice, he strove, but each time the wind caught it and as with sentient malice, blew it far out of its proper course. The fourth time, catching an opportune moment when there was a lull in the storm, he flung it, and Wilmot, groping blindly, caught it in a vice-like grasp and he and Tom were drawn toward the boat.

"Yer man'll be saved to mend his rudder yit, Mis. Brady," said one of the fishermen, and she, trembling, weeping, ejaculating, uncovered her face and saw the crew of the dory lift the half-drowned men tenderly into the boat.

At that instant, with a crash of breaking timbers, the "Winged Clipper" struck the reef.

Reclining upon a heap of nets and tarpaulins in his fish-house, Tom Brady was "coming to," nicely, while Wilmot recounted to a group of interested listeners how it was that they had come so near death on the reef off Pelton's Point. The primary cause of the disaster was, as Mrs. Brady had divined, the break in the rudder post, which had been deftly spliced by Tom and had weathered so many storms that it had come to be regarded by him as a perfectly seaworthy adjunct of his beloved "Clipper." It was when they had covered more than half the return trip that they found themselves suddenly at the mercy of the wind and sea, with the rudder drifting away on the crest of a huge wave. For some time they managed to keep the "Clipper" head on by means of the long oars, but these had snapped off, one after the other, leaving them perfectly helpless, with the wind and the tide bearing them steadily and swiftly toward the reef.

Later on, Tom, having completely recovered, went home with Mrs. Brady; and Wilmot, escaping from the rather overpowering expressions of her gratitude, walked off toward

Rockville, promising to call and see the old couple next day. A promise which he kept with the following results:

It was late in the afternoon when Wilmot set out to walk to the brown cottage and the short autumn day had almost closed in before he reached his destination. Mrs. Brady was alone in the house. She greeted him with effusion, saying that Tom and her daughter had gone to the cove, but would be back presently.

"The garrul only come home this mornin' and 'twas then she heard how yoursel' an' Tom come near bein' drowned. And she was that worried about it, she wouldn't lave Tom out av her sight all afternoon."

"Was she in Boston when it happened?" asked Wilmot, seating himself in a position whence he could look out through the open kitchen door and see the apple orchard, with glimpses of ultramarine sea and crimson sky between the trees.

"She was that. She wint to see about some piece av hers that's to be pooblished in a book."

"Ah!" was all Wilmot said, but he thought of what Kathleen had told him about the girl and wondered what the piece was about that was to be "pooblished in a book." Mrs. Brady broke in upon his reverie.

"Sure she's as grateful as me an' Tom for what ye done—an' I couldn't say more, Mr. Wilmot."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Brady. When do you harvest your apples, I can see lots of them on the trees still."

"Nixt week, please God, we'll have the apples off av the trees an' in bar'ls. An' there comes Tom an' the garrul."

Wilmot, who had already caught sight of them, was gazing intently at the two as they came up through the orchard. The girl, tall and slender, walking with an affectionate hand on the old man's shoulder. Two familiar figures, advancing with the red sky at their backs. He swept his hand across his brow as if to dispel some strange illusion. Mrs. Brady watched them also, her arms akimbo and her stout body poised ungracefully. Presently they paused in the kitchen doorway, and Wilmot saw them as in a dream, silhouetted against the western sky.

"Here's Mr. Wilmot come to see you, Tom!" cried Mrs. Brady, exultantly.

"Wall, now!" exclaimed the old man, and bolted forward

with an outstretched, brawny hand, which Wilmot wrung silently.

"Come here, Kitty. Here's Mr. Wilmot as we've b'en a-talkin' 'bout. This is my little gal, Mr. Wilmot."

The girl advanced into the room. In the dim light, Wilmot could not fully discern her expression, but felt the nervous tremor of her hand, as he took it.

"Miss O'Neil!" there was astonishment, reproach, yet a vibrant note of pleasure in the exclamation. "I did not expect to meet you here!"

"I know you did not. But I am glad to see you—glad to have the chance to tell you how grateful I am for what you did yesterday—when you saved my dear father's life."

"Kitty says she hev met you afore," put in the old man, beamingly, "though she never said nothin' 'bout ye till to-day. It's a won'er ye never happened down to the cove w'en she war thar. I've often spoke to ye 'bout my little gal, ain't I?" he went on, taking Kathleen's hand and drawing her toward him. "She's the best gal—though she be but my step-darter—but we don't never mention that fac', do we Kitty, bein' as I married her mother w'en she war a bit of a baby, an' she be more like a darter to me than if she actooly war."

Wilmot gazed at the two, still half dazed by the shock of his surprise. He was trying to adjust his mind to the new conditions. A hundred considerations whirled through his brain. This was the woman he loved—at home and among such surroundings—spoken to familiarly by this old man and woman. Why had she not told him that she was only the daughter of a fisherman and that her mother had begun life as a cook or a housemaid. Kathleen had deceived him! and yet—no, he had deceived himself. She had simply been silent where she might have spoken—she had a right to be silent, if she chose. But if he had known—could he have helped falling deeper in love with her? Suddenly, from the chaos of his reflections, the one dominant truth asserted itself irresistibly—he loved her. And before this great, vital fact all other considerations melted away like mist before the sun. He loved her! And not fifty fishermen fathers or housemaid mothers, thought he passionately, should stand between them, if she loved him and would have him. So he caught her hand and drew her away from Tom's side to his own.

"I don't know," he said, looking earnestly into Tom's eyes, "how much Kathleen has told you about our last meeting, Mr. Brady—or whether she told you that I asked her to be my wife?"

Tom and Mrs. Brady both interposed with characteristic exclamations of surprise.

"She wanted me to wait for my answer," went on Wilmot "Won't you and Mrs. Brady urge her to give it to me now?"

"Sure, Kitty child, what would ye kape Mr Wilmot waitin' for. If ye care for him, shpake up."

But Tom remained silent, looking intently at the girl.

"Daddy!" she said, appealingly, "Daddy!"

He spoke presently, with a little tremor in his voice, but otherwise quite cheerfully.

"I knowed this had to come some time. An'thar ain't no man as I could think more worthy of ye than Mr. Wilmot, Kitty—an' so I says, if ye love him—don't keep him waitin' too long a-fore ye say so."

"Are you sure—sure that it is all—all right," said the girl almost in a whisper, turning to Wilmot.

"Quite sure, Kathleen, if you love me," he replied.

"And I shall be with them often? I could not bear to be separated from them long—even—even for you."

"You shall not be," he replied, lifting her hands to his lips.





**PART Owners: A Tale of
the Sea, by W. B. Hayward.
Illustrations by R. T. Schultz***



"TOPPIN'S bad again to-night," said Mac, slamming the foc'sle door and lighting his pipe. "He's looking over the rail and mumbling to himself, like a man out of his senses."

"Toppin's a fool," said Snyder, decidedly.

"What's that?" asked a sleepy voice from a bunk.

"Toppin's a fool," repeated Snyder, "an idjiot. I'd like to see myself growing thin over a girl."

* Written for Short Stories.

"You ain't never had the chance," remarked the sleepy voice. "Anyway, you couldn't grow much thinner."

"Shut up Tommy," said Snyder. "Can't you get a new joke? I've heard that before."

The ill-smelling little lamp over the foc'sle table sputtered weakly, and Mac took it from the socket to trim the wick.

"Toppin said to-night," remarked Mac, putting the lamp back into its place, "that Miss Mary had refused him again. She said that as she's the owner of the Rocket and Toppin is only the sailing-master, it wouldn't be right for her to marry him. Them was her words. I think she don't want to share the profits the Rocket makes with Toppin. It's cheaper to hire him at twenty-five dollars a month—that's the real reason."

"Don't she love him?" asked Tommy, who boasted a girl of his own in Perth Amboy.

"Course she does," replied Mac. "She couldn't get along without him."

"Then why don't he desert and bring her round?" growled Snyder. "I always said he was a fool."

"He may be a fool, but he's a good mate," said Tommy, who had served under "bad" mates.

"They be two fools," observed Mac, sagely, "and they'll end by marrying. I think—"

The opening of the foc'sle door cut short Mac's discourse.

"Boys," said Toppin's voice from the deck, "Miss Mary says we must get under way at daybreak."

"Miss Mary, the owner," whispered Snyder, when the door was closed, "the owner of the Rocket and the sailing-master of Toppin. She's made him lose his bearings already, and if they ain't spliced soon that man'll be a shipwreck. Did you ever hear such a voice? It's like a gull in a storm. I reckon he'll jump overboard some night if this keeps up."

Snyder paused for breath after this outburst.

Tommy's hand, holding a sou'wester, slid from underneath the blanket and fanned the air. The light went out with the first breath.

"Keep your reckonings to yourself, Snyder," he said, "I want to sleep."

Early next morning the two-masted schooner Rocket, in ballast, crossed the bar with a fair wind on her voyage down the coast in search of a cargo. The crew, though busy on

deck, had time enough to glance aft occasionally. Toppin was at the wheel, and Miss Mary sat near the companion-way, silently watching the foaming wake of the little craft. For an hour she remained quite motionless, with a troubled look upon her features. Toppin's eyes moved slyly from the compass to the cross-trees, and thence to the girl. These stolen glances she appeared not to notice, although once or



twice Toppin saw the color come to her cheeks and her hands clasp and unclasp. The sailing-master wanted to speak, but all his thoughts seemed to have fled. At last he blurted out:

"Miss Mary, the Rocket needs a coat of paint forward."

"Does she?" she replied, without raising her eyes. "Then I'll tell Mac to have it done."

"Why don't you tell me?" asked Toppin.

"You," she responded, "I—I'm going to discharge you when your month is up."

Her tones cut deep into Toppin.

"Discharge me?"

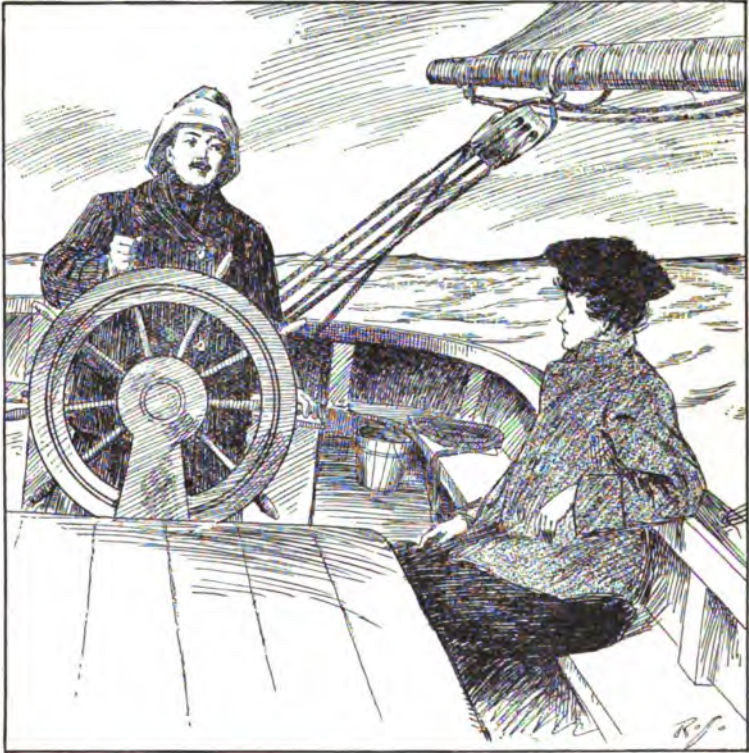
"Yes, I'm dissatisfied with you. Not with the way you run the ship, but the way you treat the owner. You've got no business to make love to me. Haven't I often told you that I would never marry any one? The Rocket is home and everything else to me. Isn't that enough?"

She looked at the scarred hull, the weather-beaten rigging, and the mildewed sails of the schooner with a rather subdued expression. There was a deal of truth in what she said, for the Rocket had been her home since as far back as she could remember. It had also been her father's home, and when he died, Miss Mary, as the crew respectfully called her, in deference to his last wish stayed by the ship, earning her living, just as the old skipper had earned his, by sailing the Rocket

up and down the coast, stopping wherever there was the chance of finding a cargo.

Toppin, too, had spent nearly the whole of his life aboard the *Rocket*, first as a boy with Miss Mary's father, then as sailing-master when she assumed command of her legacy. The idea of leaving the vessel hurt him almost as much as the thought of giving up Mary. But Toppin was proud; he would go without a word of protest.

The head-sails shook with a shift of wind, and Toppin forgot



his troubles for a moment to bring the schooner again on its course. Mary saw, in the way he turned the wheel and glanced aloft, the personification of the true sailor—cool, alert, resourceful. She was fond of Toppin; he had always been a good friend; and she wished for nothing more than a good friend—for the present, at least.

It wasn't a question, as Mac thought, of sharing the profits made by the *Rocket* with another; that idea had never

entered her head. Toppin was kind, considerate, straightforward, and not a fortune-hunter, as she well knew, but Toppin was also masterful. She, on the other hand, had the freedom of the sea in her blood, and her independence just then weighed greater than her affection. In the end she knew that Toppin's will would prove stronger than her own, but in view of his persistency she felt that the only way to postpone the end would be to discharge the sailing-master.

In spite of her self-reliance, Mary's act caused her some misgivings, and as she again turned the matter over in her mind it was rather with a spirit of remorse. Had Toppin spoken then, her decision would have been revoked, and she almost wished he would speak. The silent, grave face at the wheel first provoked her sympathy, and then angered her, because the eyes seemed to notice everything on the schooner except the owner.

A light rain which then began to fall added discomfort to her anger, and Mary went below. When she came on deck some hours later Mac was steering. The wind had fallen to a breath, and the sails flapped idly while the Rocket rolled and pitched with the gentle swell. Toppin was forward near the port rail, smoking and watching the vagaries of the weather, as he often did when anything hung heavily on his mind. His reveries were disturbed by footsteps, and turning, he saw Mary coming toward him.

"Miss Mary," he said, "we're going to have some fog. It's getting thick out there," jerking his thumb in the direction of the misty horizon. "If we can get wind we'll run in close and anchor for the night. There is no bottom out here."

Mary showed her disgust plainly; she expected that Toppin would speak of other things.

"All right," she responded, "do as you please. You're the sailing-master."

It was now Toppin's turn to be disgusted.

"The sailing-master," muttered he, after she had gone; "I think I'll give up the sea. It don't agree with me."

Toppin went aft and took the wheel.

"Mac," he said, "if we don't get a breeze we'll be in trouble. The tide's carrying us inshore fast."

With the gathering darkness came the fog, cold, damp, and impenetrable. Looking forward from the poop the Rocket loomed up like a phantom ship, with masts and rigging and

sails faintly outlined against the gray blur. At intervals Tommy rang the tuneless little bell with a vigor born of the chilly atmosphere, while standing on the starboard rail, lead line in hand, was Snyder. As the schooner rolled and yawed without steerage-way, the creaking booms swung to and fro, their canvas alternately blotting out the port and starboard sidelights.

Toppin felt nervous and dispirited. The lead had given him no sign of bottom, yet he knew instinctively that the schooner was not far from shore.

"She'll have a better excuse to fire me if I run the Rocket aground," he thought, watching the cloaked figure that sat on a water-tank a few paces away.

The stillness of the fog emphasized the constant drip of moisture from rope and spar, and gave a double significance to each sound aboard the schooner. Eight bells had barely struck when a cry of "Bottom" came from Snyder. With a sense of relief Toppin threw the wheel hard to starboard.

"Get the sail off her," he shouted to Mac, "and stand by to anchor."

Possibly it was the creak of the tackle in the blocks, or the rattle of the chain in the hawse-pipe that drowned all other noises, for no one heard the scraping sound against the keel. The Rocket swung gently as the chain was paid off, but only for a moment. Then something seemed to lift the stern up and it trembled. With this came a series of hard bumps against the hull, which ended as suddenly as they began.

"Mac," said Toppin, as the seaman came running aft, "I've done it, and I'll sure be fired now."

Then he told the story of how Miss Mary said she could do without his services.

Morning found the schooner in a serious, though not dangerous position. The tide had receded, leaving the stern sunk in the sand and but a few inches of water beneath the bows. A bright sun cleared the fog away, and there was little wind or swell. Mary went about the deck in silence, and beyond asking if the Rocket was leaking, appeared to take no interest in what had occurred.

Toppin himself had little to say. He sounded the well continually, and looked anxiously for signs of the returning tide.

"She's resting easy in the mud and she ain't leaked a drop," he remarked to Mac. "We'll float her when the tide rises, if we have luck."

Time moved slowly, and more than once the sailing-master went over the side to examine the position of the vessel. Forward the men were talking about Toppin's discharge.

"I'd hate to see him go," said Tommy. "There ain't many like him."

"He won't go," replied Mac, in confident tones. "You see that out there?"

All hands looked over the rail at a plume of black smoke.

"That's a tugboat," he continued, "coming to tow us off. You can bet there's a hard crowd aboard that boat, and if they get a line on this craft they'll put in a big claim for salvage, whether we're pulled off or not. Toppin, he knows that, and he won't allow no tugboat captain to get near the Rocket. Now we've got to say that we want the schooner towed off. Miss Mary, she'll kick and go to Toppin, and Toppin he'll come to us. You follow me, boys."

Snyder and Tommy nodded their heads. They had faith in Mac, because he was Toppin's right-hand man.

"When Toppin comes to us we'll go to Miss Mary," pursued Mac, "and we'll say that unless she takes Toppin back we'll take a line from that boat. Ain't that right?"

"That's a good bluff," chuckled Snyder. "I guess it oughter work."

In the afternoon as the sun moved into the west, the tide began to lap against the sides of the Rocket, gaining a little more energy with each minute. Twice a dingey had come from the tugboat with offers of assistance, but the sailing-master turned it back without comment. The third time the boat brought a hawser, which was paid out from the steamer. Toppin stood at the rail with something shining in his hand.

"I'll shoot the first man that boards this schooner," he said quietly, pointing the revolver at the boat.

The dingey stood off for further parley.

"Mr. Toppin," said Mac's voice, "you'd better take that line. If you don't we will."

"Who's in charge of this ship?" asked Toppin, hotly.

"You are, but—"

"There ain't no 'buts' about it. Call Miss Mary and call Snyder and Tommy. We'll settle this right now."

It was the first time the crew had ever made trouble, and



the sailing-master took the mutiny as a personal rebuke, because he knew his time of service was short.

Mary came forward and stood beside Toppin.

"We want that schooner to tow us off," began Mac, "and—"

Toppin interrupted him.

"Am I in charge still?" he asked Mary.

"Yes, until the end of your month," she replied.

"Then you men go forward and obey orders. Are you going?"

Toppin raised his pistol hand.

There was a rustle of skirts and Mary was standing with the muzzle pointed at her head.

"Don't!" she cried.

The revolver came down slowly and went into Toppin's pocket. The sailing-master looked rather ashamed of himself.

"Mac," he said, "I always thought I could trust you."

"So you can," responded the seaman. "We don't want to make no trouble and we'll float the Rocket without that tug if Miss Mary'll agree to take you back."

Toppin's eyes shone with gratitude, then his voice grew hard.

"Don't bring Miss Mary into this. I'm working for the Rocket, not for myself."

Mary felt all her resolutions slipping away. The humiliation of the position hurt her, yet she knew that Toppin had spoken the truth.

"I'll do it, Mac," she said, and ran directly to the cabin.

In her stateroom Mary buried her face in the pillows of the little bunk. Overhead she could hear hurrying footsteps, and the quiet voice of Toppin giving orders to the men. There was a splash at the stern—the splash of a boat dropping into the water, which, as Mary's sea-training told her, was to carry the light anchor and warp to be used in pulling the schooner out of the mud.

Later the boat came back, and then she heard the song of the men as they walked the capstan-bars around. One by one the links of the chain wound over the windlass-drum, and the anchor which had been dropped the night before came slowly out of its muddy bed. As the tide rose to the flood the Rocket began to move, and both warp and chain grew shorter.

The hoisting of the jib aroused Mary and, though it took

much courage, she came on deck. Walking up to Toppin she put out her hand.

"I hope you will forgive me," she said.

A puff of wind filled the jib and the Rocket at last slipped off the sand-bank into deep water.

Toppin left the wheel and drew the girl to him. Mary's resistance had ended. As she lifted her face the sailing-master bent over and kissed her.

"There's nothing to forgive," were his words.

From the capstan-head came the cheers of three lusty sailors.





BROKEN Glass: The Story of a Misunderstanding, by C. F. Marsh*



THE March winds had dried up the mud in the village street, and the ground beneath Mrs. Skeemer's bow-window was smooth and hard. Small boys, in groups, were spinning tops. A ring had been drawn on the level surface, and the boys were pegging at one another's tops, the object being to fling one top with such force on to another that the rival plaything was either split, or dented, or at least knocked out of the circle. Some tops had gained a notoriety for either splitting or resisting powers; others, bright and new, had yet a reputation to make.

Mrs. Skeemer lived in the house that looked straight down the village street. Of its kind the house was a large one, two-storied, with attics above, a door on one side, and a big bow-window on the other. Probably it had been a shop, which would account for the largeness of the window, but not in Mrs. Skeemer's time, for in this house she had spent fifteen years of married life and twenty years of widowhood. Her husband had been a cattle-dealer, wealthy by repute; indeed, he might have saved money had he been able to close or start a bargain with, say, three out of the six glasses of whiskey which, he assured his wife, were indispensable to bring a negotiation to a successful conclusion. Still, as he frequently added with pride, no one could say he had ever seen him drunk, only a little market-fresh, and that in the cause of duty. One Saturday night, after an unusually busy day, the call came to Skeemer to abandon business and carouse. Then it was discovered that his savings were *nil*; his possessions consisted merely of three or four meadows, a few acres of arable land—all heavily mortgaged—and the house. By

*From Longman's Magazine.

judicious management and tireless economy Mrs. Skeemer had been able to stop on in the house and there bring up her one daughter, Matilda.

"Tilda had been born in the first year of her parents' married life. As a baby she had had no beauty to commend her; she was one of those children who have the misfortune to be born old. Her face was pinched and wizened, her limbs large and loose-set; "she had a rare frame," said her father, with an eye always on the look-out for bone in a bullock. Indeed, "Tilda, with her red hair, gaunt frame, and awkward movements, unconsciously called to mind a cross between a Polled Devon and an Irish home-bred. She had given the lie to the popular notion that an ugly baby makes a good-looking woman, for she had grown up with the face nature had given her at her birth; and if ever she had had the good fortune to possess an admirer, it could not have been beauty of form or visage that had attracted him. But no admirer had ever come her way. From twenty to twenty-five the dreams common to all healthy-minded girls had been hers; till thirty they lingered as a hope against hope; now, at thirty-five, they were being heroically consigned to the limbo of the might-have-beens. Yet even now the woman longed for a swain, were it only someone to walk out with on Sunday afternoons, to relieve the monotony of existence in her mother's cottage, and to show the womanfolk of the village that she was not set apart from them by an inability to excite interest, if not admiration.

Matilda had been early apprenticed to "the dressmaking," and as soon as she had thoroughly learnt her trade she had returned home to set up on her own account, and her earnings to no small extent augmented the annuity which Mrs. Skeemer had procured from the wreck of her husband's business. In the bow-window she sat and sewed all day, as she had sat and sewed for the last fifteen years. Painted on the three front panes of glass was her name, with "Dressmaker" beneath in Roman letters, and, under all, the words "Ladies' own materials made up."

The last six months the village had been unusually full of life, for the church was undergoing a much-needed restoration; a Norwich firm of builders were doing the work, and most of the workmen were lodging in cottages or in any house in the village where they could find accommodation. Mrs. Skeemer

had tried, but failed, to let her empty upstairs room; gossip said the would-be lodgers fought shy of Matilda.

The church was nearly finished, and the scaffolding was gradually being pulled down; soon the village would return to its state of settled calm.

But, judging by the four dresses hanging from the walls of Matilda's workroom, it was evident that the girls of the place had not lost their opportunity. The dresses were wedding garments, and on this windy March afternoon 'Tilda was busy putting the finishing touches to a fifth.

"Seems ter me this here church ha' brought a proper lot o' trade ter th' willage," said Mrs. Skeemer, who, owing to stress of business, was helping her daughter by basting a lining into a skirt. "Sich times never wor, nor never will be agin, I reckon. Fancy five wedden' dresses all made at once; that's afore th' time o' Palmer's, or Caley's o' Norwich!"

"Yes," said 'Tilda, with a sigh, "it ha' brought about plenty o' courten' and given' in marriage."

"And a lot o' trolloping mawthers they be tew," said Mrs. Skeemer, breaking her cotton in an effort to give emphasis to her words. "Hussies, I call 'em. Look at that there Charlotte Knights—catched another, afore her husband, who wor only took last November, be cold in th' ground. 'Tain't decent," she added. "Fare ter me all th' gals in th' willage be clean gone off their heads."

"Yes, they ha' been in a flutter, mother, ever since th' workmen come."

"Flutter and tutter tew," snorted Mrs. Skeemer. "As I told Mrs. Grapes t'other night when her tew gals comed ter be tried on, I wouldn't ha' my gal exhibiting herself in th' street as some folks ha' let theirs dew, gayed out in all their finery and Sunday clothes o' weekdays, so as ter pick up a husband, be he stone-mason, carpenter, plumber, or even one o' them architeck's clerks. Still, 'Tilda," her mother went on, and there was an aggrieved note in her voice, "I did think when there wor all this here marryen' going on yer might ha' 'tracted a mate. It be time yer begins ter think about it, if yer ever going tew."

"Me, Mother! Oh, I never give such things a thought. I be past th' time o' day, I be. Besides, I ain't 'tractive enow," said the girl, with some bitterness.

"Oh, well," answered Mrs. Skeemer, "if all these here men

be only looken' out for a pretty face, they be a set o' blessed fules, and desarves all they gets, and yer be well out o' th' muck."

Matilda did not answer, but turned her face to the window and watched the boys playing with their peg-tops. Suddenly there was a cry of "Splits" and a crash of broken glass, as a top bounced through the window and fell with a bang on the floor; then a scamper of feet, and before mother and daughter could get to the door every boy was out of sight.

"Young warmens!" screamed Mrs. Skeemer, "I ha' complained ter th' p'liceman afore about them boys playen' under our winder, but that there p'liceman ain't worth narthen. There be a whole pane o' glass gone. I'll skin th' young warmen whole when I catches on him. Who was it, 'Tilda?"

Shrill yells proceeded from the little lane which ran by the side of Mrs. Skeemer's house, and a big black-bearded man came into view, dragging a small boy by the ear.

"It worn't me—it worn't me, I tells yer," howled the boy; "it wor young Armine Skipper. He did it; he pegged mine with his great owd boxer, and that split my top and flew through th' winder. It worn't me, 'Tilda Skeemer," he began again, for by this time the man had dragged him to where Mrs. Skeemer purple with rage, was standing. "It wor Armine, and he ha' split my fiver, he ha'," he added, in a whimper.

"I don't care who't be. Dew yer hold him, my gude man; I'll pay him," and Mrs. Skeemer dived back into the room and returned with a cane yard-measure, which she flourished viciously.

"Oh, don't hit him, mum," said the man. "He be fairly frightened. I be a glazier, and I'll put th' winder right for yer in no time." Saying this he let the boy wriggle out of his grasp, and smiled as he watched him fly howling down the street.

"Yer ortn't ter ha' let him go; he should ha' been made a 'xample of," grumbled Mrs. Skeemer. "Plague take the brats; housen ain't safe ter live in nowadays."

"I'll sune mend it for yer. I ha' got a few bits o' spare glass over from th' church winders. I'll put that in for yer arter tea."

"Yer wery kind," said Matilda. "Me and mother'll be much obliged if yer will; and if yer'll tell us what it costs——"

"Oh, I'll dew it for love," broke in the man, laughing, as he turned to go.

For the first time in her life Matilda blushed. She pushed her mother in at the door, which she shut, then turned to the window and watched the man till he passed out of sight.

"Wunnerful nice talken' kind o' chap that there man be. Wery obligin', I must say. What be his name, 'Tilda?" asked Mrs. Skeemer.

"William Winter, I believe," 'Tilda answered. "Most on 'em be wery respectable men what ha' been employed at th' restoration."

"Yer see, these here workmen bain't like others," went on Mrs. Skeemer. "They dew narthen but go from church ter church, and that makes 'em kind o' religious-like. Why, they spends half their time in church, and that keep 'em quiet and steady, I s'pose. But, 'Tilda, did yer hear what he said? How as he ud mend th' winder for love. Shouldn't wonder if he worn't struck in th' gizzard with yer all at once."

"Mother, don't carry on so. What next, I should like ter know?" said Matilda, angrily.

"Why, I shall be losing my 'Tilda if I don't mind."

"Don't talk sich nonsense, don't. Oh, mother, how can yer put sich thoughts inter my head?"

"Those thoughts were there afore I spoke," said Mrs. Skeemer knowingly. "Never mind, 'Tilda, marriages are made in heaven, and glassen winders are smashed on earth; and when a man say he be going ter dew th' job for love—well, there, if yer can't put tew and tew tergether I can. But yer allus wor so highly strung and nervous that I'll ha' ter lend yer a hand; still, that's better than being tew forward, 'specially with th' men-folk. I'll go and put my bonnet on, and go down ter th' butcher's and see if I can't get tew or three chops, or a little porks ter bakes, and we'll ask that there Mr. Winter ter supper. If he mend our winder, yer must try and mend his heart; I see that want a patch on it."

"Oh, mother," pleaded Matilda, "don't be in sich a hurry with things."

"Dew yer go on with yar sewing and leave things ter me." And saying this Mrs. Skeemer put on her bonnet and bustled out into the street.

Matilda stood by and watched the glazier as he cut the old putty out of the window. She saw that he was strong,

healthy, and good-looking, moreover he was middle-aged; he had reached the time of life when a man should settle and make a home for himself. By judicious questioning she learnt that he was still unblessed with a life companion, and by the time he had placed in position the new sheet of glass, and was rolling the soft putty in his hands, fancy had built him a house and given it a fitting mistress. She was awakened from her dreams by a sharp tap on the glass, and as Winter ran the knife up and down the sides he remarked, "Well, there, that be done. Did yer find out which boy broke it?"

"No, and don't s'pose we shall."

"Oh, well, least said, soonest mended," he laughingly replied, as he gathered up his tools. "That didn't take long ter right-side."

"No, yer seem a masterhand at yar trade," replied 'Tilda, with a look of admiration. "Gude workmen like yer be scarce about here, anyways."

"Be that so?" said Winter eagerly. "Hain't yer got a glazier in th' village?"

"No, there ain't none nigher nor Stalham, six miles off, and he be wery dear," the woman answered.

"Be that so?" said Winter meditatively. "Well," he went on, after a moment's silence, "my job at th' church be finished this week, and I be gotten' tired o' journeying about from place ter place. I say ter myself t'other night as I wor gotten' ter bed: "Winter, that be time as yer give over jobben' about for contractors, and got married and set up for yarself in some willage like this here." My mind ha' run on that notion a deal since then. Don't yer think there be sense in what I say?" and he gazed fixedly at Matilda.

"Deed I dew," put in Mrs. Skeemer from the doorway. "At yar time o' life that be only fit and proper as yer should marry a quiet, respectable gal, one as could earn a little herself tew." Unconsciously she inclined her head towards her daughter.

"Well, afore I thinks about marryen' I ha' got 'ter be sure there be a liven' ter be got round these parts," said the man.

"Yer could get a liven' right enow," answered Mrs. Skeemer. "Th' place be wunnerful gain for that, bain't it, 'Tilda?"

"I should think so," said the girl.

"Think so, indeed! I be wholly sarten about it. Why, if here be a winder broke we ha' ter wait till a travellen' glazier

pass through th' willage, or send arter th' Stalham chap, and he 'on't come 'less there be several jobs and he can make a day on it. Half th' owd women ha' ter stuff up th' holes with rags, or paste a bit o' brown paper over ter keep out th' draught. Yer wouldn't be hard up for a job! Only yer'd want to get married sune; yer'd be kind o' dull in th' willage when all yer mates wor gone."

"Oh! as ter that I sha'n't be long about courten'," Winter made answer. "I ha' got a matter o' twenty pound put by, and with another five pound or so I could get enow furniture ter start with."

"Course yer could," said the delighted Mrs. Skeemer, and she gently inclined her elbow in the direction of her daughter's ribs. "P'r'aps yer might pick up one as had five or ten pounds put by." Tilda was conscious that Mrs. Skeemer was vigorously jerking her head at her, and trusted the movement might pass unperceived by Winter. "Come yer inter kitchen, Mr. Winter—I ha' got some chops in th' pan—and ha' a bit o' supper and a glass o' stout along o' us. If yer ha' put th' winder in for love, yer can stop and ha' a bit o' wittles along o' me and my gal. There be a million* pie, tew, 'Tilda made last Tuesday. I should like yer ter taste on it, just ter see what a gude cook she be."

For the greater part of that night Matilda's red head turned and tossed on its pillow. Could there be truth in her mother's suggestions? Had she, indeed, excited interest in this big, black-bearded man? What if he should want to make her his wife? Wife—she thrilled at the word, she, who in all her thirty-five years had never once felt love nor hoped to arouse it!

In the morning her mother greeted her as "Mrs. Winter." To Matilda's blushing exclamation, "Oh, don't, mother!" Mrs. Skeemer replied, "Well, ain't his name Winter? I ha' wintered and summered him, as th' sayen' go, and I seed in his eyes last night as he meant haven' of yer, 'Tilda, so there 'tis!"

"But there be th' trade, mother; he seemed ter want ter make sure o' that afore anything."

"Course he dew; he be a long-headed chap, or else he wouldn't cast his eyes on yer, 'Tilda. He'll get trade. L U V sune overcomes all difficulties, don't you make no mistake on it, my gal."

*Pumpkin

Matilda always helped with the housework before she sat down to her dressmaking, and this morning, as she swept out her bed-room, she noticed a spider's web high up on a top pane of glass. She lifted her broom to sweep it down, and indavertently hit the pane. The sound sent a whole succession of thoughts racing through her brain; she paused to consider, then yielded to temptation, and the sharp end of the broom went crashing through the glass.

"Mother," she shouted down the stairs, "misfortunes never dew come single-like. I ha' just broke another winder."

"Lor' bless th' gal! ha' yer? Well, that dew be a coincident, ter be sure. I ha' just cracked one o' the panes in th' backus; set th' owd pail tew close ter it when I went ter pump th' water at th' sink. Fare ter me we be makin' a trade already."

The next morning a note was sent to William Winter, in which it was stated that if he thought of starting a business Mrs. Skeemer would be pleased to be allowed to become his first customer.

Accordingly Winter put in an appearance that evening, and again Matilda stood by and watched him as he worked. He told her he had thought over her mother's suggestions, and was determined to carry them out, and that as soon as he saw a chance of making a living in the village, and had put by another five pounds, he should get married. The girl turned away to hide her confusion, a wild tide of hope surging at her heart. And yet when he was gone, and she had time to recall the incident, she remembered that though he had spoken of matrimony he had said nothing to lead her to imagine she was the woman of his choice. When her mother next alluded to the subject she called her attention to the fact.

"Lawks a mussy me, gal, proper thinken' men don't go at it like roaren' bulls," was Mrs. Skeemer's answer. "They kind o' dance round it for a bit. Don't tell me as how he'd ha' talked over all these plans, which his gude head seemed stuffed full on, if yer worn't th' gal he had set his heart on. I fare ter think he be a kind o' narvous man, and them sorts never likes ter show theirselves tew eager. But just look at his eyes; they keep searchin' after yer like a hen's arter barley."

Matilda agreed with her mother that his eyes were very fine, and perhaps they did speak the words his tongue refused to utter.

"In course, they dew," said the sanguine Mrs. Skeemer. "Why, I remember in days gone by how yar poor father, when he comed home from market and called up ter see me, couldn't sometimes utter a word, but did all his courten' with his eyes, poor man."

"But William Winter be a glazier, and don't tend no markets," said 'Tilda, dubiously.

"Still I ha' known yar poor father nonplussed and speechless on the days when there worn't no market. Men be like some children what sits staren' hard at a cake and never tells yer they wants a bite on it, and yet at last yer obliged ter go and cut 'em a slice. But there, my 'Tilda, don't yer fash yarself; if he 'on't cut th' cake, maybe I'll lend him a hand."

A week passed by, and, much to 'Tilda's and her mother's mortification, Winter did not make it his business to call again. Matilda only saw him as he passed the bow-window on his return from work, and she had to content herself with a smile and friendly nod. The second Sunday of their acquaintance was a day of great humiliation; for the girl, well versed in the etiquette of courtship, had expected him to arrive and take her for a walk. All day long she sat in her out-of-door garments, waiting, and waiting in vain, for Winter failed to put in an appearance.

"I can't make no sense o' th' man," said Mrs. Skeemer, when hope had been given up. "I'll break another winder ter-morrow, see if I don't."

"'Tain't no use," said Matilda, despair in her voice. "Besides, we can't allus be payen' out hard-earnt money for new glass."

"Ah, that's where yer makes a mistake," said her undaunted parent. "'Th' salt cost money afore yer can ha' it ter put on th' bird's tail. I ha' made up my mind ter catch him for yer, and I'll dew it yet."

So on the morrow there was another pane of glass to mend, and yet another before the week was out, and with each visit Winter paid Matilda's passion grew more and more intense. She had almost brought herself to believe that her affection was returned, and the man's answer to a timid question as to the state of trade made her desperate. So slack was work, Winter declared, he had almost made up his mind to leave the village. That night the girl resolved to put into action a plan she had long conceived. She rose from her bed, dressed

herself in the dark, crept downstairs, and noiselessly opened the back door, buoyed up for her venture by the phantom of Winter fleeing from a village of unbroken window-panes. She made her way to the coal-house and picked up a hammer, which she hid in her cloak; then she looked out of the gate at the deserted street stretching away on either hand.

The moon was at the full, and one side of the street was brightly illuminated, while the other lay in deep shadow. Matilda moved on tiptoe down the dark side, hardly daring to breathe, terrified at her own temerity. At the end of the village she paused, her scheme yet unaccomplished, trembling from head to foot in the fear of detection. Drawing her long cloak tighter round her, she withdrew into the shadow of a gable-ended cottage, and gazed earnestly at the opposite house. The windows shone green in the moonlight; a conviction came over her that she was being watched—surely the blind in the little dormer window was being pulled cautiously aside. With a great effort at self-command she stayed motionless in her hiding-place, her eyes fixed on the window—after all it was but a crease in the blind. She resisted the longing to rush home; the thought of William Winter steadied her.

"S'pose he leave because o' th' trade. This be my first and only chance," she muttered to herself. "Oh, Gawd, I dew want ter be like other folk, ter ha' a husband o' my wery own. I will be a gude and loven' wife. If men only knew what women would dew for love!" William Winter must not know now; but some day, when she was married, she would tell him of the agony she had suffered for his sake, and he would kiss away the tears from her ugly face and stroke her coarse red hair. "Now or never," she gasped, and, tightly grasping the long handle of the coal-hammer, drew it from beneath her cloak. Going up to the window of the house whose shadow was sheltering her, she raised her arm and with all her force drove the pointed pick-end through the pane. She was prepared for a crash and a shower of glass, but to her surprise she found the sharp instrument had made but a small hole; there was a bang, and a little tinkle of falling pieces as she drew the hammer out again, that was all.

"That's enow for this one," she murmured, as she passed on to the next house. The glass fell with a crash, and she fled up the street, leaving the next few cottages untouched.

Then she paused to listen, not a sound was to be heard but the beating of her own heart; she broke out into a cold sweat, but again summoning up courage she ran quickly to the next window, which she treated in the same way, breaking one at intervals all the way home. Flinging the hammer into the shed, with boots in hand she crept upstairs, passing the door whence issued Mrs. Skeemer's loud snores, and threw herself sobbing on her bed. Presently she crept to the window and lifted the blind; the street lay silent, bathed in moonlight. No one was about, no one seemed to have heard the breaking glass; she might conclude her action would pass undiscovered.

Mrs. Skeemer had occasion to visit the village shop before breakfast, and she came back all aglow with excitement.

"Yar sweetheart ha' got a deal o' trade on his hands ter-day, 'Tilda," she cried. "I seed him goin' down th' street with half a crake o' glass on a frame under his arm. Then I met that there lazy warmen o' a p'liceman, and he come up ter me and say, 'I understand, Mrs. Skeemer, as how yer ha' had a lot o' winders broke lately, hain't her?' I say, 'Yes, tew or tree;' and then he had th' imperence ter say as how that seemed a wunnerful coincident, that did; for so sune as that there Winter set up in th' glaziering for hisself everyone's winders got broke, and he wor going to make a deal o' inquirasion about it. Lor', gal, yer 'on't believe me when I tells yer half th' winders down our side o' th' street be found broke t' mornen'. He say some people did ha' their suspicions, they did."

Matilda turned away at this remark, but Mrs. Skeemer was far too interested in her story to notice the hot rush of blood to her daughter's cheeks.

"I up and say, 'Ah! yer be a deal o' use for a p'liceman, yer be,'" went on the woman. "'If yer only did yar duty o' seeing arter th' parish, instead o' sitten' in public-housen, yer wouldn't be patchen' things as yer didn't ought onter gude honest folk like William Winter.'"

"He say, 'What dew yer mean?' and began ter get tetchy-like. So I tells him that wor them young warmen o' boys, as th' street be invested with, as broke them winders. I tell him only a week or tew back one o' their tops came spinnen' through one o' mine, and I say, 'If yer'd only use th' eyes th' Almighty gived yer, but which yer mostly keeps for looken' inter th' bottom o' quart pots, yer'd see their tops.' He say,

'Tops be out.' 'Yes,' I say, 'tops be out, but tip-cats be in;' and I pointed ter half o' score o' them young warmens, with sticks and tip-cats, playen' in th' street. 'That's how we poor folk have ter keep menden' o' our winders.' I say, 'and if I'd anything ter dew with th' law I'd make th' p'liceman pay for 'em.' He looked kind o' comical-like and sheeped, I can tell yer; he never said narthen, but went off double quick, and I seed him when he though I worn't looken', go and cuff th' boys as wor playen. and take away their tip-cats. Tryen' ter make out yar sweetheart a kind o' ramscallien o' a thief!'"

All that day Matilda suffered great agitation of mind. She started at each approaching footstep, and as the policeman walked up the street the conviction seized her that he was making straight for the cottage, and she felt compelled to go outside and lock herself into the coal-house. Mrs. Skeemer could not refrain from commenting on her behavior.

"Lor', 'Tilda, I can't think what kind o' ail yer. Yer keep jiffin about, and seem ter be startin' out o' yar shoon every moment. But there, I reckon I know what 'tis. The love-fever ha' got hold on yer, and yar man don't get no for'arder, that's what 'tis."

Matilda bowed her head over her work, and remarked as how she did feel all over alike.

"Ah!" replied her mother, "I knew yer did. I seed Winter arter dinner-time, and told him to come over and put some glass in that there old cowcumber frame. I ha' a mind ter grow a cowcumber t' year. Lor'! his face lit up proper, and he say, "'I'll come, Mrs. Skeemer. Th' trade be comen' on proper now.'" I say, 'That's right, and yer'll sune ha' ter get married. 'He laugh and say, "'That's so, Mrs. Skeemer.'" So don't be down-hearted; he'll pop th' question afore long, mark my words on it."

"Yer be right kind, mother," the girl answered, a tear falling on to her work. 'Tain't everyone ha' got a mother like yer be." But for all her brave words, Matilda was very sad at heart.

In the following week a knock came at the door, and Mrs. Skeemer poked her head round the bow-window and exclaimed:

"It be that there gal, Julia Hitchcock."

"Oh, dear, dear," said Matilda, "she ha' come arter that there dove-gray dress o' hers, and I ha' only got it cut out.

I ha' been so busy alongo' these fandanglen' wedden' dresses I hain't had time ter think o' hers.

Julia Hitchcock, rosy-cheeked and smiling, came into the room, and Matilda explained the situation.

"'Tain't no matters, 'Tilda; 'deed, I be rather glad, 'cos I wants a bit o' alteration," she answered, simpering. She took the string from a parcel. "Look yer here, I wants yer ter put a bit o' this white chiffongy stuff round th' neck, and a bit o' lace round th' cuffs, and dab a bow or tew o' lace and chiffong anywheres yer thinks it would look nice and proper-like."

Mrs. Skeemer was immensely interested. "Be yer agoing ter a ball? Maybe yer going ter be a bridesmaid at one of these wedden's?"

"Well, it be like this," laughed the girl. "When I ordered this here dress th' chap as I ha' been walken' out with—he be a mod'rate careful kind o' feller, he be—didn't think as how he could afford ter marry me yet awhile. But he ha' done wunnerful well o' late, and we be goin' ter get wed—leastways, he be plaguing th' life out o' me ter get wed at once, so I s'pose I must as sune as the banns be out-arst. They be up for next Sunday; yer must come and hear 'em, 'Tilda," she simpered. "I thought if yer fussed that there dove-gray up with them bits o' white stuff, that 'ud dew for me ter be married in. I see in th' papers that be all th' fashion ter be married in a walken' dress, so dew yer have it done by this day tree weeks."

Matilda's eyes were fixed on the chiffon that lay in her hands. Very slowly she asked the question: "And who be yer going ter marry?"

"Why, don't yer know?" cried Julia, surprised that a fact of such supreme importance to herself had not reached the ears of the village dressmaker. "Why, I be going ter marry Mr. William Winter, th' glazier. He and I ha' walked out th' last six weeks. He tell me yer and yar mother ha' been wery gude customers ter him. I'll drop in and tell yer all about it one afternune; I be busy ter-day. Gude-day."

The finery she held dropped from Matilda's nerveless fingers; she clutched at a chair for support.

Mrs. Skeemer stood with open mouth, watching the young girl's retreating figure, her face purple, as if a fit were imminent.

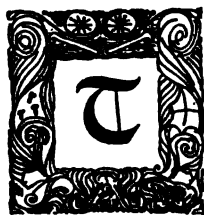
"There, there, there, ter think on it," she burst out at engh "I never had anything give me sich a tarn in all my

life. My heart's in my mouth, and my liver's where my heart ought ter be. Ter think as that great, ugly, black-bearded blackguard should ha' sarved us like this. Here ha' we been acosseten' on him up, agetten' on him trade, and I afryen' o' th' best pork chops ter put inter his great, ugly stummick, and he ha' been maken' love ter yer; and now——"

"But he never did make love ter me," interrupted Matilda, dry-eyed, but with a strange choking feeling in her throat. Mentally she had projected her vision down the long vista of time, and saw herself sitting in that window, making gay dresses for the happy and dark ones for the mourners, as she had sat and toiled for the last fifteen years.

"Now don't make matters wus by adden' lies ter th' job," snapped Mrs. Skeemer. "Yer said as how he did it with his eyes, and I seed him, tew, th' mean scoundrel. Gude customers, I should think we ha' been, that be th' worst cut of all!" She went to a drawer and took out a paper. "'For repairing cowcumber frame and warious winders, glass and time, thirteen and nine-pence,'" she read. She banged the bill down on the table. "Dang him, 'Tilda, he shall wait for his money, I can tell yer. And look yer here, my gal, if ever yer goes sweethearten' agen, don't yer go in for a glazier, for that come tew expensive, that dew, a-repairing o' th' broken glass."





THE Fur Coat: The Story
of a Matrimonial Difference,
by Ludwig Fulda. Translated
from the German by Mrs.
J. M. Lancaster*



PROFESSOR MAX WIEGAND TO DOCTOR GUSTAV STRAUCH.

BERLIN, November 20.

DEAR GUSTAV:—I have some news to tell you to-day which will certainly surprise you. I have separated from my wife, or rather we have separated from each other. We have come to an amicable agreement henceforth to live entirely independent of each other. My wife has gone to her family in Freiburg, where she will no doubt remain. I am for the present in our old house; perhaps in the Spring I may look for a smaller house....perhaps not, for I can hardly hope to find so quiet a workroom as I now have, and the idea of moving appals me, especially when I think of my large library. You will, of course, want to know what has happened, though, to tell the truth, nothing has happened. The world will seek for all possible and impossible reasons why two people who married for love and who have for eleven years lived what is called happily together should now have decided to part. Yes, this world which thinks itself so wise, but whose judgments are nevertheless so petty, so superficial, will doubtless be of the opinion that there is something hidden will include this case too in one of the two great categories prepared for such affairs, because it cannot conceive of the fact that life in its inexhaustible variety never repeats itself and that the same circumstances

*Translated for Short Stories.

may assume different aspects according to the character and disposition of those interested. I need not tell you this, my dear Gustav. You will understand how two finely organized natures should rebel against a tie which binds them together after they have once become fully convinced that in all matters of real importance a mutual understanding is possible.

My wife and I are too unlike. Between her views of life and minethere yawns an impassable gulf. The first few years I hoped to influence her, to win her to my ways of thinking—she seemed so docile, so yielding, took so warm an interest in my work, so willingly allowed herself to be taught by me. Not till after our children's death did she begin to change. Her grief at this loss—a grief which neither of us has ever been able to live down—matured her . . . made her independent of me. A tendency to morbid introspection took possession of her and gave increased tenacity to those ideas and convictions which my influence had hitherto held in check, though not wholly eradicated. She plunged deeper and deeper into those mists of sentimentally fantastic imaginings, passionately demanding my concurrence in her views. She lost all interest in my professional work, evidently regarding the results of my researches in natural science as troops from an enemy's camp. At last there was hardly a subject in the wide realm of nature and human existence on which we agreed. To be sure we never came to an open quarrel, but the breach between us was constantly widening. Every day we saw more and more plainly that though we lived side by side, we no longer belonged to each other. This discovery irritated and distressed us, and at last forced all other feelings into the background. 'If we had not once loved each other so dearly, or even if we had now ceased to feel a mutual respect this state of affairs might perhaps have lasted for years, but our ideas of the true meaning of marriage were too lofty, our sense of our own dignity as human beings too profound to permit us to be content with so incomplete a realization of our ideals. I hardly know who spoke first, but our resolution was at once taken and the decisive words uttered as calmly and naturally as the overripe fruit falls from the tree. For the first time in many years we were able with perfect unanimity of sentiment to discuss a subject of the greatest importance to us both, and this fact alone soothed our overwrought nerves. We parted yesterday with

the utmost decorum, without a word of reproach, a note of discord. Memories of our early married life, of the long years we had lived together made it difficult to refrain from some manifestation of tenderness, and I assure you that I never felt greater respect for my wife than at the moment when, all petty considerations cast aside, the true magnanimity of her nature asserted itself. Her manner, what she said, and also what she did not say robbed the situation of all trace of the commonplace and gave it dignity. Deeply moved, almost in tears, we clasped hands in farewell, so we may look back upon the closing scene of our wedded life with unalloyed satisfaction.

I had already, with her consent, referred all business details to our lawyers for we were not even to communicate with each other by letter.

Life must begin again for both of us and already I breathe more freely. The Rubicon is passed. I believe that you will congratulate me.

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PROFESSOR MAX WIEGAND TO DR. GUSTAV STRAUCH.

BERLIN, December 12th.

DEAR GUSTAV:—Pardon me that I have so long delayed thanking you for your answer of friendly sympathy to my last letter.

I have been in no condition to write, and even now find it difficult. You congratulate me without reserve on a step which you regard as essential to my welfare and to my intellectual development, but you do not take into consideration what it means to separate from one who has for eleven years been one's constant companion, day and night. Indeed, it is only during these last dreary weeks that I, myself, have realized what the change signifies to me. Habit is all powerful, especially with men who, like you and me, live in the intellectual world and so require a solid substructure.

How are we to take observations from the tower battlements when its foundations are not firmly established? Of course, I am as certain as ever I was that our decision is for the best interests of us both, but in this queer world of ours we can take no step without unlooked for results.

I am bothered from morn till night with trifles to which I have never given a thought since my bachelor days

things which I will not mention, so absurdly insignificant are they and yet they rob me of my time and destroy my peace. I am at a loss what steps to take to rid myself of the thousand petty cares and annoyances which my wife has hitherto borne for me. These servants! Now that the cat is away they think that they can do just as they please, and you have no idea of the silly obstacles over which I am continually stumbling, of the wretched pitfalls which beset my path. Here is one instance out of many For several days it has been very cold, and I cannot find my fur coat. With the chambermaid's assistance I have turned the whole house upside down, until she finally remembered that my wife, last spring, sent it to a furrier's to be kept from the moth. But to which furrier? I have been to a dozen and cannot find it.

If I had only not agreed with my wife that we were, under no circumstances, to write to each other, I should simply ask her but it is best so. No strain of the commonplace must mingle with the sad echoes of our farewell. No a farce never follows a drama. Perhaps she might even imagine that I seize the first pretext to renew relations with her. Never!

To-day it is six below zero. . . .

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PROFESSOR MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 14.

DEAR EMMA:—You will be greatly surprised at receiving a letter from me in spite of our mutual agreement, but do not fear that I have any intention of opening a correspondence with you. Our relations terminated with all possible dignity, and the sealed door shall never be re-opened. I have but to ask a simple question which you alone can answer. What is the name of the man to whom you sent my fur coat last spring? Lina has forgotten the address. Hoping soon to receive an answer, for which I thank you in advance,

MAX.

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FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 15.

DEAR MAX:—His name is Palaschke and he is on Zimmer street. I cannot understand Lina's forgetfulness, as she took the coat there herself.

EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 17.

DEAR EMMA:—I must trouble you once more . . . for the last time. Herr Palaschke refuses to let the coat go without the ticket, as he has had several disagreeable experiences which have made it necessary to be very strict. But where is the ticket? I spent the whole morning looking for it and, of course, Lina has not the slightest idea where it is. She flew into a rage when I found a little fault with her, and she leaves the house to-morrow. I prefer paying her till the end of her engagement, and shall also give her a moderate Christmas gift, for I cannot stand such an impertinent person about me.

Well . . . be so kind as to write me a line telling me where to find the ticket. I have already taken a severe cold for want of the fur coat.

Hoping that you are well and quite comfortable with your family.

MAX.

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FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 19.

DEAR MAX:—The ticket is either in the second or third upper drawer of the little wardrobe in the dressing-room or in my desk, in the right or left pigeon-hole. I could find it in a minute if I were there. Lina has great faults, but she is very respectable. I doubt whether you can do better, and now, just before Christmas, you will not be able to replace her. You should have put up with her at least a fortnight longer, but it is none of my business. I hope your cold is better. I am quite well.

EMMA.

* * * * *
PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 21.

DEAR EMMA:—The ticket is not to be found either in the wardrobe or in the desk. Perhaps it slipped out when you were packing and was thrown away. I can think of no other explanation.

To-morrow or next day I will again go to Herr Palaschke,

and try to wheedle him out of my property by all possible blandishments and assurances, but to-day I am confined to my room, for my cold has resulted in a severe attack of neuralgia.

I had a dreadful scene with the cook yesterday. On the day of your departure she gave me notice, and when I tried to persuade her to remain she turned on me and told me in a very insolent manner that I knew nothing about housekeeping, and that it was only out of sympathy for you, dear Emma, that she had so long remained with us at such low wages, and that she should leave immediately. I answered calmly, but firmly, that she must stay till the end of her engagement. Then she began to cry and storm and at last was so outrageously impertinent as to declare that even *you* could not manage to live with me. I lost my temper and must, I suppose, have called her an "impudent woman," though I cannot remember saying it. Unfortunately for me I have had no experience in dealing with viragos.

Two hours later, after supper, I rang and discovered that she was already gone, bag and baggage, leaving in the kitchen a badly spelled *billet doux* in which she threatened me with a lawsuit for calling her an "impudent woman," in case I should refuse to give her a certificate of character.

I am now entirely without servants. The porter's wife blacks my shoes for a handsome consideration and brings me from the café meals which ought to be condemned by the health inspector. As you have truly remarked, it will be impossible to replace these women before the New Year, but I have already written to a dozen employment bureaus and will go myself as soon as I am able to leave the house. This has grown into a long letter, my dear Emma, but when the heart is full the pen runs rapidly.

I also suspect that abominable cook of taking my gold sleeve buttons those left me by Uncle Friedrich though I have, of course, no proof. Have you any idea where they are? 'f so please drop me a line. Good-bye, my dear Emma, and I trust you are more comfortable than I am.

Your

MAX.

* * * * *

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 23d.

DEAR MAX:—I have read with much sympathy your account of your little mishaps and annoyances. The cook

often spoke to me very much as she did to you, but I put up with it because she is a good cook and only cooks who know nothing are polite. Now you see what I have had to stand for years and that there are problems in that department also which cannot be solved by natural science.

I cannot, at this distance, advise you what to do, and should not consider myself justified in doing so now that our intimate relations have been terminated in so dignified a manner, as you so truly remark in your first letter. As for the furrier's ticket and the sleeve buttons, I will wager that I could find them both in five minutes. You *must* remember how often you have hunted in vain for a thing which I have found at the first attempt. Men occasionally discover a new truth but never an old button.

Since a correspondence has been begun by you I have a little request to make. I forgot before I left to ask you for the letters which you wrote me during our engagement and which at my request you put in your safe. They are my property and I should like to have them as a reminder of happier days. Will you be so kind as to send them to me?

Wishing you a Merry Christmas,

EMMA.

BERLIN, December 25th.

* * * * *

MY DEAR EMMA:—Your kind wish that I might have a Merry Christmas has not been fulfilled. I never spent so melancholy a Christmas Eve. You will not wonder that I could not bear to accept the invitations of friends . . . to be a looker-on at family rejoicings . . . so I stayed at home, entirely alone. I found it utterly impossible to get a servant before New Year and yesterday was even without a helper from outside. The porter's wife put a cold supper on the table for me early in the afternoon, for she was too busy later with Christmas preparations for her children. A smoky oil lamp took the place of the Christmas tree which you always adorned so charmingly and with such exquisite taste every year, and there were none of those pretty surprises by which you supplied my wants and wishes almost before I was conscious of them. There was nothing on the Christmas table but my old fur coat, which Herr Palaschke—softened by my entreaties and assurances and perhaps also by the spirit of Christmastide—had allowed me to take the

preceding day. It was as cold as charity in the room, for the fire had gone out and it was beyond my skill to rekindle it, so I put on the fur coat, sat down by the smoky lamp, and read over the letters which I wrote you during the time of our engagement and which I had taken from their eleven years' resting place to send to you to-day.

Dear Emma, I cannot tell you how they have moved me. I cried like a child, not over the tragic ending of our marriage alone, but at the change in myself which I recognize. They are very immature and in many ways not in accordance with my present way of thinking, but what a fresh, frank, warm-blooded fellow I was then, and how I loved you! How happy I was! How artlessly and unreservedly did I give myself up to my happiness! Till now I have thought that there has been a gradual, slow change in you alone, but now I see that I also have altered, and God knows, when I compare the Max of those days with the Max of to-day, I do not know to which to give the preference. In the sleepless nights which I have lately spent, I have thought over the possibility of transforming myself into the Max I then was, and grave doubts have suggested themselves whether the differences in our views of matters and things were really as great as they seemed to us, whether there is not outside of them something eternally human, some neutral ground where we might continue to have interests in common.

Try and see, dear Emma, whether such a voice does not speak also to your soul. We cannot undo the past, but nothing could give me greater consolation in my present unhappy condition than to know that you could say yes to this question, for your departure has left a void in my house and in my life that I can never, never fill.

Thy most unhappy MAX.

* * * * *

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 27th.

DEAR MAX:—I very willingly gave you information as long as it related only to tickets and sleeve buttons, but I must decline answering the question contained in your last letter. Did you really believe, you old Pedant, that I left your home—which was also mine—because we disagreed in our views of matters and things in general? Then you are

mightily mistaken. I left you because I saw more plainly every day that you no longer loved me. Yes, I had become a burden to you . . . you wanted to get rid of me. If in that dignified parting scene you had said one single tender word to me, I should probably have stayed, but, as usual, you were on your high horse, from which you have now had so lamentable a tumble just because your servants have left you. I too have served you faithfully, though you do not seem to have recognized that fact. I never let the fire go out on your hearth. It was not *my* fault when it grew cold.

Who knows whether you would have noticed the void left by my going if your fur coat had not also been missing? This gave you an opportunity of opening a correspondence with me, and it seems to be only fitting that it should now close, since you have once more regained possession of your property. I, at least, have nothing more to say.

Goodbye forever,

EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO DR. GUSTAV STRAUCH.

* * * * *

BERLIN, January 8th.

DEAR GUSTAV:—I have a great piece of news to tell you. My wife returned to me yesterday, and at my earnest solicitation. I thought I could no longer live *with* her, but I find it equally impossible to live *without* her. I have just discovered that she too was very unhappy during the time of our separation, but she would never have acknowledged it, for her's is the stronger character of the two. I do not know how to explain the miracle, but we love each other more dearly than ever. We are celebrating a new honeymoon. The great questions of life drove us apart, but is it only the little ones which have reunited us? Would you suppose that one could find a half-desiccated heart in the pocket of an old fur coat? The stately edifice of my worldly knowledge totters on its foundation, dear Gustav. I have a great deal to unlearn.

MAX.



JOHN CROFT'S Fortune: An African Miner's Story, by Edmund Mitchell*



I.

FIVE hundred pounds now, and another five hundred when your report is in the hands of my directors. Will that meet you, Mr. Croft?"

The speaker was a Frenchman, although his English was irreproachable and his foreign accent of the slightest; and he looked the true Parisian of the Boulevards, even here on the hotel veranda in the British West African town of Sekondi, where Frenchmen among the whites are as rare as albinos among the negroes. Those dark alert eyes, the carefully waxed mustache, the pointed beard, the little tricks of expression and gesture—the uplifting of eyebrows now, the shrug of shoulders a moment later—all betrayed his nationality despite the disguise of a brick-red complexion, a big pith helmet, and white drill clothing that was frayed at the wrists, patched on the knees, and more or less mud-stained everywhere.

His companion wore clothes of pretty much the same style, the work-a-day costume of the European on the Gold Coast; but broad shoulders and massive limbs, the strong square jaw under a beard that was rough and unkempt, and blue eyes, softly meditative but wondrously full of dogged determination, bespoke the man of Anglo-Saxon race just as unmistakably as did the name by which he had been addressed.

Croft had been slowly pacing the veranda, but at the point-blank question he stopped in front of the canvas chair occupied by the Frenchman.

"Just let me have a look at the drawings you spoke about.

*From Temple Bar.

Monsieur Jollivet," he demanded abruptly, and with hand extended.

Jollivet's fingers moved to the breast pocket of his jacket, but there they hesitated.

"In confidence, then," he cautiously stipulated.

"Of course, in confidence," was the impatient rejoinder. "When you are dealing with John Croft, sir, there is no need for that proviso, as every man on the Gold Coast will tell you."

No further demur was made, and Croft, seating himself at a small bamboo table, proceeded to smooth out the drawings. They were two in number—pen-and-ink tracings on glazed transparent linen, obviously facsimile reproductions of original sketches on more perishable material. The first was a route map through a particular district of the Senegal country, with natural features indicated, but very few names filled in; the second was a mining plan, showing a line of reef, shallow surface workings, and assay results noted here and there in tiny figures. Croft examined both documents with close and critical care, but swift professional understanding.

"Who drew these?" he asked, glancing across at Jollivet.

"A countryman of yours—William Millar, by name. He died, poor fellow, the day after he got back to Dakar."

"Oh, Billy Millar," exclaimed Croft, now in the act of refolding the tracings. "I knew him well; we were together on the Rand. He was a good man at his work, and thoroughly to be trusted when the whisky bottle wasn't too close to his elbow. But I don't suppose that failing troubled him in the back-of-beyond country he had got to here," he murmured with a stern, sad smile, as he handed back the papers.

"My syndicate put up a hundred thousand francs the very day I took the proposition home to Paris," resumed Jollivet eagerly. "Then, as I have told you, I returned to Senegal with a couple of assistants. But although we have made three tries now to get up the river, the trouble we have had with our black boys, not to speak of the accursed malaria, has each time proved too much for us. Yet you could help us through, Mr. Croft, I am certain. You Englishmen seem to have the knack of managing the Kroo boys," he added, in reluctant and doleful admission of an unpleasant truth that had to be recognized.

"Well, Monsieur Jollivet," replied Croft, after a few moments reflection, "you are aware that I have taken my

passage for England on to-morrow's boat. But now I know that it was my old friend Millar who located this show, I'm inclined to close with your offer. Who are your comrades on the river?"

"Oh, both trained engineers, like yourself. I don't profess to be that, you understand; I am merely in charge of the finances. But Delorme and Rolland hold their diplomas from the *École Polytechnique*."

"Have they had practical experience of mining?"

"Not of gold-mining. This is their first trip out."

Croft smiled somewhat contemptuously, but his mind was now made up. He rose again to his feet.

"Well, count the matter as settled," he said decisively. "Go along to the bank, and bring me back a draft on London for five hundred pounds. I shall want to take my own head-boy with me, and my Ashanti servant as well. Luckily both are in Sekondi—they came down from Teberibie to see me off. You'll engage them for the trip at current rate of wages. The boat due to-morrow calls at Dakar, so we can all go by it. Have your agreement ready with the draft, and we shall sign. I suppose you can be here again in an hour's time?"

The Frenchman sprang up with alacrity.

"I am delighted!" he cried. "I couldn't have got a better man on the whole coast."

"I don't suppose you could," laughed Croft dryly, as he took the proffered hand and gave the grip that closed the bargain.

When Jollivet had departed, the Englishman went straight to his bedroom. From one of his steel trunks he produced a brooch in the shape of a butterfly, a dagger-shaped ornament for the hair, and a ring engraved with the signs of the zodiac, all in pure gold, and of rough, but exquisite, native workmanship. With a little sigh, he proceeded to wrap the trinkets in tissue paper [and pack them carefully into a cardboard box. This last he sealed, using a big iron seal, which he had made with his own hands at Teberibie, four years before, when he had first come out to West Africa and discovered that gummed envelopes were useless in that atmosphere of humid heat. Yes, it all came back to him as he looked at the clumsy die—a horseshoe pattern, for luck—and dropping into a chair, he let memory ramble.

Four years on the Gold Coast, the land that has earned the

grim name of "The White Man's Grave," and he had stood it without a single day of serious illness. Malaria had been all around him, but he had defied its insidious attacks. Of three-and-twenty young Englishmen who had come out with him on the voyage, more than a dozen, to his knowledge, were dead, and the others had long since returned, health shattered, with the miasma poison in their blood for the rest of their days. He alone was making his escape unscathed. And yet, while he stood at the very gate beyond which safety and happiness lay, a fatal fascination seemed to be luring him back, as if at the beckoning of some mysterious, insatiable fiend—the ghoul that loved to sit upon the lonely sepulchres of the white men whose very souls he had devoured.

John Croft had followed his profession of mining expert in many dangerous parts of the world—in ice-bound Klondike, in Coolgardie, typhoid-smitten in its early days, in rough American camps where the bowie-knife often flashed and the revolver came ready to men's hands. But he had never seen the gaunt specter of death mow down his heavy harvest as in this terrible land. Not once in the whole course of his career had he flinched from the risks of his calling. Nor did he flinch from peril now. He was only thinking of the young wife at home, whom he had left four long years ago, and who would be well-nigh broken-hearted by this further spell of separation, this drawing out of weary, anxious, fearful waiting. And she was preparing even now for his home-coming, as her last joyous letters told.

Poor little Etta! And the baby—he would shed tears of bitter disappointment, too—the little toddling boy who, as Etta wrote, called loudly every day for "fader darling" far away, and prayed nightly for his safe return to those who loved him.

Yes, rough man as he looked, hard and stern as he was reckoned among his fellows, John Croft had those who loved him tenderly and dearly; for well did they know that it was for their sakes he had endured parting and faced danger—that it was for them he had accepted the big pay, with the big hardships and the big risks of the Gold Coast.

Yet, when the family nest-egg had been fairly earned, he was going to seek for further store. It was not avarice that drew him on. No, it was pure love for his dear ones. A few more months of self-denial, and the provision for their

future would be surer still. Yes, yes, he was doing the right thing. And reverie was thrust away.

He reached for his letter case, and wrote his wife words of cheerful, courageous consolation. Just a little longer, then he would be back to her, with this extra windfall of a thousand pounds in his possession. Meanwhile, there were the trinkets as testimony of his love, made of gold washed by his own hands from the pounded quartz, fashioned by a native workman under his own eye.

Thus John Croft followed his fortune.

II.

They were four weeks up the Senegal river—the three Frenchmen, Jollivet, Delorme, and Rolland; the Englishman, John Croft; his head-boy, Moses Acquah; his Ashanti servant, Bruku; and some thirty Kroo "boys" to row the five big canoes that carried the store of tinned provisions, and the "trade" of cotton cloths, beads, and cheap trinkets. Jollivet was in command, as the organizer of the expedition and the holder of the Paris syndicate's purse. But the leader's enthusiasm had long since oozed out at his finger tips; he had become an open scoffer, denouncing the dead prospector Millar as a fraud, and himself as a fool, for having ever placed the slightest credence in the papers that had come into his possession, as he cynically admitted, at the price of a coffin, and a bottle of rum for the men who had dug the grave.

It had, indeed, been a terrible time—bad enough to have daunted the courage of one of sterner stuff than Jollivet. Almost from the start the natives on the banks had been unfriendly, and had withheld supplies of fresh provender; latterly, they had become openly hostile, and there had been incessant attacks, in which blood on both sides had been spilt. Then both of the young French engineers, new to the life of hardship, and unseasoned to the climate, had fallen ill of malarial fever, until their hatchet faces and ague-shaken frames had fairly scared their compatriot out of his wits, and made him only anxious to get back to the coast. Moreover, the black fellows in the boats were now in a state of sullen discontent, bordering on mutiny. Not only had they buried their dead after several affrays, but they were brow-beaten and back-beaten until all willing service had gone out of their

hearts. For Jollivet had a sharp tongue and a heavy hand, and he used both unmercifully when things went wrong.

On this subject of flogging, remonstrances on the part of Croft had proved of no avail. Not that he failed to realize that the law of the stick is the final law when dealing with untutored negroes on their own soil. It is the only logic they can understand. The fear of retribution must be not merely under their eyes, but on occasion the sting of it must be on their skins as proof of its genuine reality. Knowing this well, Croft had thrashed on occasion, and would thrash again. But what he objected to was the use of the rod for trivial offenses, whereby its usefulness in graver emergencies was destroyed.

Jollivet, however, who had been a trader on the coast off and on for a good many years, had acquired a profound belief in the efficacy of the bamboo. Constant and indiscriminate whacking was his only idea of compelling obedience, and he insisted upon having his way—for, with three Frenchmen in a bunch, there was no talk now of British *savoir faire*. So Croft, in a minority of one, had perforce to yield the argument and submit to the leader's ordering of things, as any breach of discipline on his part would have been the signal for a revolt among the blacks, in which, as like as not, all four Europeans would have lost their lives. Yet sometimes it had been only by the sternest self-repression that he had stayed his strong right arm from snatching the stick out of the white man's hands and laying it across his cowardly shoulders. Jollivet had read the grave looks of disapproval, and had met them by somber scowls.

With all these elements of failure present, and all these factors for failure at work, it was only the indomitable will of John Croft that held the expedition together. He would not give up the quest for Millar's reef when once it had been begun. Nor would he turn back at Jollivet's bidding, because there was a better chance of saving the sick men's lives by pushing onward and out of the fever-belt, than by exposing them to the risks of the long down-river journey through deadly swamps. For Croft counted now that they were but a score of miles at most from the point where they would leave the boats, and strike overland for the hill country where lay both health and gold.

Four weeks up the river; but only two days more, and the worst of the journey would be over!

It was the noontide hour, and, according to invariable custom, the party was encamped under the shade of a grove of palms. The invalids had been swung in hammocks, and Croft had gazed pityingly on their fever-flushed cheeks, haggard eyes, and parched lips. Ah, if only he could get them some fresh food—a chicken or two for soup!

At the thought, Croft laid hold of a Winchester rifle, slipped a few handfuls of beads into his pocket, and called on Bruku, the bravest lad among all their native following, to accompany him. He nodded to Jollivet, merely remarking that he would not be very long gone. Then he set forth through the forest. There must be some village near, and a bargain might be made, for the Ashanti boy had a smattering of almost every dialect spoken in West Africa.

When, a few hours later, Croft returned, with Bruku carrying half a dozen chickens slung across his shoulder, the boats were gone! He read everything in a flash. He had been deserted. Since he would not yield to the counsels for return, he had been betrayed.

Bruku had also instantly understood, and was shaking an angry black fist down the river.

But where was Moses Acquah, the head-boy, of whose fidelity Croft felt assured? A Fanti by race, an intelligent and well-educated youth, Acquah had ever been honest and true to the white master who had treated him firmly, but always justly and kindly as well. Where was he now? As Croft again asked himself the question his eye swept the littered and deserted camp. He caught sight of a sheet of paper pinned by an old pocket knife to the bole of a palm tree.

Acquah had been to a missionary school, and he wrote very fine English, in the most correct commercial style, but with just a flavor of Scripture now and then. His penciled message read thus:

"MOST HONORED MASTER:—By letter of this date I beg to inform you that the French bosses have betaken themselves home. Peradventure I might have remained behind with you, but by God gracious do your sincerely and respectfully service otherwise. I shall come back to-night, or the night after mayhap, and bring the boats, for the Kroo boys will discharge service to the lion, but not to the vultures. I know how to operate on their feelings and impecuniosities when we are alone from above-mentioned vultures. The winds and the waves beat, but the tree stands. My dear Manager, you will find

bag of canned goods per invoice hidden in bushes on edge of river. I shall leave for the French bosses respectful compliments ~~re~~ the impudence with which they have taken to insult you.

"I am, sir, yours very faithfully,

"C. MOSES ACQUAH."

Croft, even in his sorry predicament, could not but laugh over this delightful letter—delightful both in its phrasing and in the comforting assurance it conveyed. Well did he remember that fine sentence about the tree and the waves and winds. It had evidently been learned from some school copy-book, and had specially appealed to poor Acquah's boyish fancy; for when he had first started his work as clerk on the Teberibie Mine, by hook or by crook it had been dragged into every letter that had come from under his hand. Indeed the admirable, if somewhat high-flown sentiment had been eliminated finally from dry business correspondence only when sixpenny fines had been exacted on every occasion of its reappearance. But the tree still stood! Whether the metaphor in its present application was intended to attest Acquah's firm fidelity or to predict his master's ultimate safety mattered little. Croft was well content to take the meaning both ways.

When the missive was explained to Bruku, the boy from Kumassi chuckled low and gleefully.

"Moses Acquah him savvy plenty much, mourra (master). Softly, softly, catch a monkey. French bosses live for die, sartin sure. Me make chop."

And with this Bruku, after foraging the tinned stores from the sedges, proceeded calmly to cook the fowls.

It was a lonely, weird night in the forest, with strange noises all around—the snorting of hippopotamuses in the river, the hoarse, eerie cry of sloths among the trees, the almost human cough of large apes, the caterwauling of wild-cats, and once the short barking growl of a leopard not a hundred yards from the camp-fire. Croft kept watch from sunset to dawn, his rifle across his knees.

But the day had not far advanced when there came from down the water the rhythmic splash of paddles and the sing-song of Kroo boys bending to the blades. Gradually the welcome sounds grew nearer, and, perched on the foremost prow that appeared around the bend, was Moses Acquah, keeping the time and leading the chorus.

The Fanti lad had been true to his word. He had brought

back four of the boats. With mercy that reflected credit on his missionary teaching, he had left one canoe, a share of the provisions, and half a dozen of the least desirable natives to help the "French bosses" on their homeward way. But he had with him nearly the whole of the merchandise for barter, and, better still, the iron box wherein lay William Millar's route map and mining plan.

With a light heart and an easy conscience John Croft resumed his journey up-stream.

III.

Six months later Croft stood in the vestibule of a handsome suite of offices in the Boulevard Haussmann, Paris. His name had been sent in to the chief director of the "*Compagnie de Mines d'Or de Simpahtaiba, Sénégal.*" While he waited, he was studying with amused interest a large map that hung upon the wall.

Yes, here was Billy Millar's land of promise all beautifully charted in detail, mountains and streams named now with fine aboriginal polysyllables, the reef defined by a bold line of crimson, the mine itself by a glorious patch of golden yellow. John Croft almost laughed right out, for he had been the only white man who had ever seen that country since its first prospector died, and he knew at a glance that the map on the wall was a mere fiction of the imagination. The very name Simpahtaiba was one that assuredly had never been heard in that remote region of Equatorial Africa.

But his reflections were cut short by an invitation to enter the financial sanctum. Croft knew enough French to understand and to make himself understood.

He confronted a stout, pompous-looking, and over-dressed individual with a gold chain like a dog collar across his waistcoat, presumably from the fabulous mine in Upper Senegal.

His card was held between fingers that trembled with indignant incredulity.

"But you are dead, Monsieur Croft!"

"Excuse me, sir, I am very much alive."

"You are dead, I tell you—you were in our prospectus as dead—both you and poor Delorme."

"And who reported my decease, may I ask?"

"Monsieur Jollivet, naturally. Delorme died of fever on

granting monarch is a myth, your trusted agent a humbug, and your mine a fraud."

Turning on his heel he left the Frenchman in sputtering impotence to make coherent reply. At the door of the room he encountered a small and meager man of secretarial appearance, who had apparently been a silent witness of the entire scene. This official gave the visitor his final *congé*.

"It is just like English impertinence to come here and attempt to decry the work of our splendid French engineers and explorers—men like Monsieur Jollivet, a Marchand, a Lesseps, and a Napoleon of finance rolled into one."

The little fellow was fairly trembling with suppressed indignation; and now at last John Croft laughed aloud.

"Certainly, monsieur," he replied, when he had again composed his features, "our friend Jollivet is a very clever fellow indeed. Marchand, Lesseps, and Napoleon, as you say, all under one skin. But don't you forget that alternative spellings in the native dialects for Simpahtaiba are Fashoda, Panama, and Waterloo."

With this enigmatic utterance, Croft went his way on to the Boulevards.

"My directors in London will see me through," was his calm reflection, as he strolled along toward a tourist agency to ascertain the hour of the first train for Calais.

And his London directors saw him through. Croft planked down his two years' savings, to help to back with working capital his map, his plans, his report, his panning tests, and his samples of the ore. Every man in the board-room followed his example, and to still more substantial amounts. As sole vendor of the property that had been, so to speak, thrust into his hands, Croft took half of the no-liability shares in payment of the concession he had secured from the native chiefs.

The new company is nominally French, for it operates in French territory. But—ah, *perfidie Albion!*—its owners are British—almost to a man. There are two notable exceptions. A thousand fully paid shares stand in the name of C. Moses Acquah, and another block of five hundred in the name of Bruku, the Ashanti boy.

Etta Croft is a happy little woman at last. She had borne the long months of separation and unavoidable silence with courageous patience, for strong was her faith in John Croft's

resolute character and in his good fortune as well. Luckily the Simpahtaiba prospectus had never come her way, to change the young wife's natural anxiety into harrowing and needless sorrow. Had anything of the kind happened, it is certain that Monsieur Jollivet would long since have felt keen regret that a lion had not indeed eaten up the man whom he so basely abandoned among the swamps of the Upper Senegal.

And John Croft, Junior, is a happy little boy. For "fader darling" will never leave home again. But the child love to listen to fireside stories about the barking panther which prowled around the camp-fire that night among the palms, about the black boy Bruku, who slept while father watched, and about Moses Acquah, the faithful negro lad who wrote the "bootifu' letter all by hisself," and kept the time for the merry Kroo boys paddling up-stream in the breaking dawn





LAPSE in Doctrine:

A Chaperon's Love-Story, by
Florence E. Stryker*



SHE laid the letter down on the table with a smile, and looked kindly across at the eager face opposite.

"I am afraid you will not like my advice, and I know you won't follow it. It depends whether you want in life the romantically tender, or the practically worth while. I am a cold-bloded creature, Grace, and must acknowledge a good income [always had more attractions for me than love in a flat, minus cooks and front seats at the opera."

The other girl colored hotly and then, with a gesture half tender, half resentful, picked up the letters from the table.

"He's awfully in earnest. He's ambitious, too. He will get on. Everyone says so——"

"No doubt, but, meanwhile, what will you do?" continued the other voice, gentle, but half-mocking.

"Oh—cook, I suppose; you just suggested it."

"Poor little lady. Well— what's the use of asking advice, dear, you have already decided."

The girl hesitated a moment, then swept across the room and hid her face on the older woman's shoulder.

"Don't think me a fool, Agnes. I cannot help it. You never seem to have been in love, to understand."

"I have never lost my head, if that's what you mean. However, perhaps you have chosen the better part. They say so in the poetry books."

"Did you never meet a man who made you forget his income? suddenly demanded the blushing little Grace.

The other laughed softly.

"There was a man once who tempted me, he—well, he

*Written for Short Stories.

hated evening dress and he considered George Meredith inferior to Thackeray, and he had other defects. He was frightfully poor, so I recovered my senses soon. No, I prefer my comfortable spinsterhood—that reminds me, I am going to chaperon to-night. The Clary girls. Do you realize I am old enough to chaperon? It is a dubious pleasure at times, but this evening the play is good and they have promised that the dinner be excellent."

The younger turned toward the door. "Good-bye, I am going to answer his letter. You need not sigh. Do you know I am a wee bit sorry for you, Agnes."

"For me!" Really there must be some truth in the idea that first love is a mental disease. Go—commit the fatal act, child, but listen—I'm sorry for myself sometimes; there, I wish you joy, dear, lots of it."

However, no memories trouble Agnes Graham's cheerful complacency as she followed the Clary girls and their youthful hosts into the dining-room of the Livingstone.

The gay radiance of the room, the pretty gowns, and merry music, the brilliant flowers; the excellent and well-served menu, and the happy laughter of her companions roused her usually calm nature into a gentle state of exaltation. She watched with appreciative eyes the young things play at love, and talked on idly and pleasantly as the dinner wound its way through many courses.

Once during a pause, the man next her, an employee at the State Department, with aspirations toward a diplomatic career, began a story which she half heard. "I call him a plucky fellow. He's over at that table in the corner. He deserves a better fate than death in some hole of a fever hospital."

These phrases vaguely reached her, and her eyes wandered to the table in the corner. Her color suddenly heightened, and she turned to the speaker. "The man in the corner, what did you say was his name?"

"Horton, as I was saying——"

"Won't you repeat your story. I am sorry I did not hear it."

"It's not so much, but the men at the office were talking about him to-day. He's a doctor, and has been professor of some little one-horse western college. Some friend of his was awfully hard up and wanted to be married and had a mother to

support and all that. Well, this Horton resigns and works this friend into his vacant place, and then to make them believe he does not regret it, gets a place down in South America with some mining company, they say it's a regular fever hole, some of the boys in the office knew the friend and told me. He sails Saturday, I believe."

"I think he was rather foolish, don't you?" said Miss Graham, quietly.

"Why, yes, I suppose so," assented the young diplomat. He had secretly regarded it as a rather fine thing, possessing certain romantic tendencies himself.

The party in the corner broke up, the men passing out near her table. She heard one of them ask Horton some question and his answer was audible: "Sorry, but I leave here on the nine-thirty."

Miss Graham resumed her usual smile and gave her attention to the last course. She was especially gay as they drove to the theater, and the Clary girls had occasional inward qualms as to their wisdom in the choice of a chaperon.

Still Miss Graham was such a social power they smothered their jealousy in the honor of being in her party and tried to overlook the growing devotion manifested toward her by their own escorts.

Toward the end of the first act, Miss Graham suddenly asked her escort the time.

"Quarter of nine. Capital plot, isn't it?"

"Yes, very."

Instead of the stage scene there stretched before her the long, dull sandy reaches of a western inland county. She heard a man's voice pleading, tenderly, passionately, almost roughly, as he guided their little buggy beneath the yellow stone walls of the State college.

He had said nine-thirty.

She sat silent and watched the curtain fall on the act with lips drawn and white.

It must be nine.

The orchestra began with a flare of drums a two-step extravaganza.

There Miss Graham told the lie of her life. "I do not feel very well. I am going out into the fresh air for a few moments. No, I will not allow anyone to come with me, not one of you."

Sweeping aside their protests she hurried into the vestibule and out to a carriage.

Which station should she order? She looked despairingly up and down the vast dimly lighted avenue. Suppose she made a mistake. At last with an unspoken prayer she named one to the driver.

The carriage dashed up the great street and she shrank back in the corner and tried to collect her confused thoughts. Once Grace's girlish little face with its happy smile flashed before her. "And I called her a fool," she whispered. "What if she saw me now?" Then a host of clamorous fears beset her. Suppose it were too late.

The carriage stopped. They had arrived. She looked up as she stepped out at the vague, majestic outline of the Capitol which loomed above her, and then beyond to where shone the soft brilliant stars of a southern winter night. Then she entered the great building with a steady heart and walked anxiously up and down the aisles. He was not there, but it was only nine-fifteen.

She watched the door with feverish eyes. How the men and women poured in! She heard a train called. Still he was not there. More people; always more people, but he did not come.

She strained painfully her anxious vision to catch a glimpse of the familiar figure. The minutes slowly passed. He must have gone to the other station. It was the just retribution of the even-handed gods.

Then her heart stood still. He came through the doors hastily, with the same old awkward gait, peering nearsightedly at the station clock.

She advanced with swift grace. "Good evening. You are a traitor to your old friends. Here in Washington and no word to me. I have been forced to waylay you at the railroad station."

His intent surprise was evident. "Agnes, Agnes Graham, you here! How did you know——" He stared at her evening gown and drooping roses. She answered gayly:

"The newspapers are strong on distinguished visitors. Of course they mentioned you."

He flushed and shook his head impatiently. "You still speak falsely if occasion demands it, I see; however it is delightful to meet you again. You look very well."

"So you are going away from your college life. Going to South America. You ought not to do it. Why should you? It is not worth while."

"You did not think Sandy City worth while if I remember." He spoke sharply, with the same, old tactless, naked emphasis.

Then the gatekeeper's voice roared over them: "Nine-thirty express for New York."

He started involuntarily and moved from her toward the exit. He began to mutter something about his pleasure at the unexpected meeting and his regret that he must say good-bye. She felt he was striving to utter the proper sentiment, to do the proper thing, and her heart grew sick at the thought that her wild little attempt was about to fail. One moment more and she would be alone with a bitter memory for daily company, the secret knowledge of a terrible mistake. They stood at the gate now. He touched her hand and in her confusion her program slipped to his feet. He picked it up, glancing vaguely at it, then his face changed swiftly and he looked from it straight into her eyes. Then he took her gently by the arm and led her away.

"Let us find a quiet place and talk."

"But the train!"

"There are other trains."

"You must not stay just to gossip with me," she protested feebly, but he made no response, only led her into a secluded corner and spread the program out upon his knee.

He read slowly:

"'The Lafayette Theatre, March 10th,' that is to-night. You have been there and you came away. You came to the station here. Be honest this once in your life and tell me why you did it."

There was a long silence. He looked at her with list-compelling eyes. At last with cold and trembling fingers she unloosened one of her roses and laid it on his hand.

"Perhaps," she said very softly, "you do not want it; it is growing old and faded and it is not as sweet as it once was."

His fingers closed upon it.

"For me it is the only rose that ever blossomed, but it is not possible it is mine. You know I am a rough gardener and I have no pleasant spot in which to put it." His voice deepened. He watched her closely. "Listen. I am poorer,

I am older, I am less worthy, less likely to amount to anything in the world, farther from your ideal man than I was five years ago, more uncouth, more of a failure. Are you sure you want me to keep it? For God's sake don't make any mistake about it now."

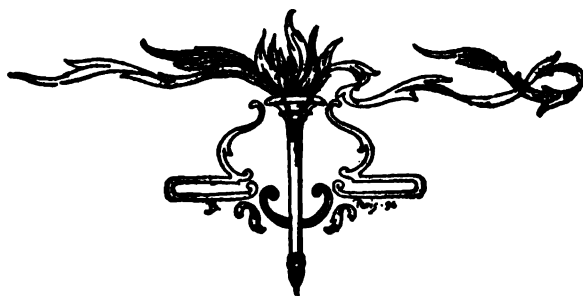
She shook her head and he saw the tears. Then his hand closed down on hers and they sat silent for a long time.

"What was it that worked the miracle, sweetheart?" he at last whispered.

She smiled faintly.

"The nine-thirty express I think you said, the nine-thirty you know."

He did not understand, but he refrained from a second question. He was content.





MOONLIGHT: An Abbé's
Story, by Guy de Maupassant.
Translated from the French by
Virginia Watson*



ABBE MARIGNAN'S martial name suited him well. He was a tall, thin priest, fanatic, excitable, yet upright. All his beliefs were fixed, never oscillating. He believed sincerely that he knew his God, penetrated His plans, desires and intentions.

When he walked with long strides through the avenue of his little country parsonage, he would sometimes ask himself the question: "Why has God done this?" And he would dwell on this with his mind, putting himself in the place of God, and he almost always found the answer. He would never have cried out in a frenzy of pious humility: "Thy ways, O Lord, are past finding out."

He said to himself, "I am God's servant; it is right for me to know the reason of His deeds, or to guess it if I do not know it."

Everything in nature seemed to him to have been created in accordance with an admirable and absolute logic. The "whys" and "because" always balanced. Dawn was given to make awakening joyful, the day to ripen the harvest, the rains to moisten it, the evenings for preparation for slumber, and dark nights for sleep.

The four seasons corresponded perfectly with the needs of agriculture, and no suspicion had ever come to the priest of the fact that nature has no intentions; that, on the contrary, everything which exists must adapt itself to the hard exactions of epochs, climates and matter.

But he hated woman—hated her unconsciously and despised her by instinct. He often repeated the words of Christ:

*Translated for Short Stories.

"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and he would add: "It seems as if God Himself were dissatisfied with this work of His." She was the tempter who had led the first man astray, and who, since then, had been ever busy with her work of damnation, the feeble creature, dangerous and forever troubling. And even more than their sinful bodies, he hated their loving hearts.

He had often felt their tenderness directed toward himself, and, though he knew that he was invulnerable, he grew angry at this need of loving that was always trembling in them.

According to his belief, God had created woman for the sole purpose of tempting and proving man. One must not approach her without defensive precautions and fear of possible snares. She was, indeed, just like a snare, with her lips open and her arms stretched out to man.

He had no indulgence except for nuns, whom their vows rendered inoffensive; but he was stern with them all the same, because he felt that at the bottom of their chained and humble hearts the everlasting tenderness was burning brightly—that tenderness which was shown even to him, a priest.

He felt this cursed softness even in their docility, in the low tones of their voices when speaking to him, in their lowered eyes, and in their resigned tears when he reproved them rudely. And he would shake his cassock on leaving the convent doors, and walk off, lengthening his stride as if flying from danger.

He had a niece who lived with her mother in a little house near him. He was bent upon making a sister of charity of her.

She was a pretty, mocking madcap. When the abbé preached she laughed, and when he was angry with her she embraced him tightly, drawing him to her heart, while he sought involuntarily to release himself from this restraint which, nevertheless, filled him with a sweet pleasure, awakening in his depths the sensation of paternity which slumbers in every man.

Often, when walking by her side along the road, between the fields, he spoke to her of God, of his God. She never listened to him, but looked about her at the sky, the grass and flowers, and in her eyes shone the joy of life for every one to see. At times she would spring forward to catch some

flying creature, crying out as she brought it back: "Look, uncle, how pretty it is. I want to hug it!" And this desire to "hug" flies or lilac blossoms disquieted, irritated and roused the priest, who saw, even herein, the ineradicable tenderness that is always germinating in women's hearts.

Then there came a day when the sacristan's wife, who kept house for Abbé Marignan, told him with caution, that his niece had a lover.

Almost suffocated by the fearful emotion this news roused in him, he stood there, his face covered with soap, for he was in the act of shaving.

When he had sufficiently recovered to reflect and speak, he cried: "It is not true; you lie, *Mélanie*!"

But the peasant woman put her hand on her heart, saying: "May our Lord judge me if I lie, *Monsieur le Curé*. I tell you she goes to him every night when your sister has gone to bed. They meet by the river side; you have only to go there and see, between ten o'clock and midnight."

He ceased scraping his chin, and began to walk up and down with heavy steps, as he always did in moments of earnest meditation. When he began shaving again he cut himself three times from his nose to his ear.

All day long he kept silent, full of anger and indignation. To his priestly hatred of this invincible love was added the exasperation of her spiritual father, of her tutor and pastor deceived and played with by a child, and the selfish emotion shown by parents when their daughter announces that she has chosen a husband without them and in spite of them.

After his dinner he tried to read a little, but could not, growing more and more angry. When ten o'clock struck he took up his cane, a formidable oak stick, which he was wont to carry in his nocturnal walks when visiting the sick. And he smiled at the enormous club which he twirled menacingly in his strong, country fist. Then he raised it suddenly and, gritting his teeth, brought it down on a chair, the broken back of which fell over on the floor.

He opened the door to go out, but stopped on the sill, surprised by the splendid moonlight, of such brilliance as is seldom seen.

And, as he was gifted with an emotional nature, one such as all the Fathers of the Church should have, those poetic

dreamers, he felt suddenly distracted and moved by all the grand and serene beauty of this pale night.

In his little garden, all bathed in soft light, his fruit trees, in a row, cast on the ground the shadow of their slender branches, scarcely clothed with verdure, while the giant honeysuckle, clinging to the wall of his house, exhaled delicious odors, filling the clear, warm air with a kind of sweetened, perfumed soul.

He began to take long breaths, drinking in the air as drunkards drink wine, and he walked slowly along, enchanted, marveling, almost forgetting his niece.

As soon as he was outside of the garden, he stopped to gaze upon the plain all inundated by the caressing light, bathed in the tender, languishing charm of the serene night. At each moment was heard the short, metallic note of the toad, and distant nightingales poured out their music note by note, their light, vibrating music that sets one dreaming without thinking, made for kisses, for the seduction of moonlight.

The abbé walked on again, his heart failing, though he knew not why. He seemed weakened, suddenly exhausted; he wanted to sit down, to rest there, to contemplate, to admire God in His works.

Down yonder, following the undulations of the little river, a great line of poplars wound in and out. A fine mist, a white vapor that the moonbeams traversed, silvered and made shining, hung about and over the mountains, enveloping all the tortuous course of the water like a kind of light and transparent cotton.

The priest stopped once again, penetrated to the depths of his soul by a growing and irresistible tenderness.

And a doubt, a vague feeling of disquiet came over him; he was asking one of those questions that he sometimes put to himself.

"Why did God make this? Since the night is destined for sleep, unconsciousness, repose, forgetfulness of everything, why make it more charming than day, softer than dawn or evening; and why this seductive planet, more poetic than the sun, that seems destined, so discrete is it, to illuminate things too delicate and mysterious for the great light, that makes so transparent the shadows?

"Why does not the greatest of bird-singers sleep like t

others? Why does it pour forth its voice in this mysterious shade?

"Why this half-veil thrown over the world? Why these tremblings of the heart, this emotion of the spirit, this languishing of the body? Why this display of seductions that men do not see, since they are lying in their beds? For whom is destined this sublime spectacle, this abundance of poetry cast from heaven to earth?"

And the abbé could not understand.

But see, yonder on the edge of the meadow, under the arch of trees bathed in a shining mist, two figures walking side by side.

The man was the taller, and held his arm about his sweetheart's neck and kissed her brow every little while. They imparted life to the motionless landscape that enveloped them as a frame worthy of them. The two seemed but a single being, the being for whom was destined this calm and silent night, and they came toward the priest as a living response, the response his Master sent to his question.

He stood still, his heart beating, all upset, and it seemed to him that he was beholding some Biblical scene, like the loves of Ruth and Boaz, the accomplishment of the will of the Lord, in one of those glorious stories of which the sacred books tell. The verses of the Song of Songs began to ring in his ears, the cries of ardor, all the poetry of this poem of love.

And he said unto himself: "Perhaps God has made such nights as these to veil the ideal of the love of men."

He shrank back from this couple with arms intertwined, that still advanced. Yet it was his niece. But he asked himself now if he would not be disobeying God. And does not God permit love, since He surrounds it with such visible splendor?

And he went back musing, almost ashamed, as if he had penetrated into a temple where he had no right to enter.





LATTER Day Co- phetua: A Summer Love Story, by Agnes Louise Provost. Illustrations by

Bessie Collins Pease*



MISS THATCHER slipped through the chattering groups on the hotel veranda like a modest-plumaged wren among birds of paradise, only no Jenny-wren ever held her brown head so independently high as this one. Spirit and much decision of character spoke in the uplift of Miss Thatcher's firmly-rounded little chin and the airily defiant gold-brown curls beneath her nurse's cap. It was an immensely becoming cap, as was the trim blue uniform of her calling, and it was

*Written for Short Stories.

small wonder that even in this fourth week of her stay here, the heads still turned for a second look as she passed by. That the masculine heads should turn was only to be expected; that the feminine heads should follow suit was a logical result of that barefaced masculine interest. It really was scarcely respectable that old Mrs. Dimmick's trained nurse should be so audaciously pretty.

Near the veranda steps a young man perched negligently on the railing, apparently studying the landscape with listless eye. This was Mr. Robert Hamilton, a young gentleman of pre-glacial ancestry and an income so comfortable that the uncharitable said it bored him to spend it, and the eyes which had first taken note of Miss Thatcher's appearance now turned swiftly for a surreptitious peep at him. He satisfied their curiosity, in the most obligingly prompt manner. He was down from the railing in the fraction of a second, met the white-capped maiden at the head of the steps with his genially pleasant bow and started down by her side, apparently as indifferent to the many inquisitive eyes leveled at his back as though they had not existed.

"In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way."

It was the merest murmuring breath, coming from a cruelly thoughtless group of girls just ascending the steps, but it reached them both, and Miss Thatcher's cheeks flamed under the saucy white cap. Not a muscle of Hamilton's face quivered, but there was a glint in his eyes not altogether pleasant, and as they started down toward the boat house the language he used in the depths of his sub-consciousness was sufficient to imperil his immortal soul.

"It was awfully good of you to give me this afternoon," was all he said aloud, bending over the brown head a trifle more solicitously than he might have done without the spur of that whispered quotation. "I feel quite conceited whenever you accept an invitation; you are such an inaccessible person."

Miss Thatcher tilted her nose and laughed somewhat flipantly, mistress of herself once more.

"Heaven forbid that I should have on my soul the sin of making any man conceited. Since I have such a baleful influence, perhaps it is just as well that I am going away in a few days."

"Oh, not really!"

Hamilton looked astonished and injured. Then he wondered swiftly if this could be a swift, impetuous resolve growing out of the remark she had just overheard.

"Oh yes, really. Mrs. Dimmick has decided that this climate does not agree with her, so we are off to find another."

"H'm."

Mr. Hamilton's grunt was enigmatic in all save disapproval as he helped her into his little bobbing cedar boat, and he mentally consigned Miss Thatcher's difficult patient to a climate from which there is no known probability of escape.

For a little way he rowed in silence, paying rather unnecessary attention to his oars and giving out considerable good muscle to get well out of sight of those confounded gaping idiots on the hotel veranda. He was thinking of the quotation about the king and the beggar maid, resenting it hotly, yet uncomfortably aware of its application. He had taken a lively interest in this white-capped professional maid from the first day she had come here with her querulous, exasperating patient, but not until she had spoken of going had he realized what a gap her absence would leave in his days. Facts must be faced; he was desperately, stubbornly, irresistibly in love with Mrs. Dimmick's trained nurse.

He knew how much gossip his attentions to her on her daily "constitutionals" had caused, how people had shrugged their shoulders and said cruel little cutting things, not so much of him, because he was a Hamilton, and was only amusing himself as men will, but of her, because she was nobody at all, and "should know her place better, my dear, than to be accepting attentions from a man like Mr. Hamilton, who will of course marry in his own station." He thought of his stately sisters and statelier mother, and what they would say to her and the possible horde of queer relations she might have. Well, there might be a row, but they must accept the inevitable. He was the one to be suited, and he would marry as he pleased.

"Do you know how lonely I shall be when you leave?" he asked abruptly.

"Lonely?" She looked the picture of unsuspecting surprise. "Why think how many there will be left. This isn't going to be a general exodus."

"They don't count. They used to, but they don't now."

"Oh, poor things! And what would you like them to do, to please your lordship?"

Her wilful evasion of his meaning merely made him the more determined.

"I can say it plainer, and I will. I mean that your presence is more to me than anything else in the world. It has meant more and more to me every day since I first met. I ask you to marry me. If you refuse me, I shall ask again."

After the first wave of color swept over her face she looked a little pale, and sat there in the stern with compressed lips and eyes unnaturally bright. There was a quiver in her voice, but there was no mistaking the words she used.

"You are asking a thing quite impossible. Please never, never speak of it again."

He was half stupefied at her vigor. Perhaps he was no more conceited than the general run of his kind, but down in the bottom of his heart he had not really expected a refusal when he had spoken of it, and certainly not a refusal as emphatic as this. The world had taught him to know his value on the matrimonial market, that was all. Besides, he was hurt in no small degree.

The ride came to a hasty conclusion, and Mr. Robert Hamilton went glumly back to his own kind and their amusements. But he could not know that as soon as she could get alone, Miss Thatcher went over all the little scene again, holding her hands to her throat because it ached with unshed tears, yet quivering with resentment as she remembered that wretchedly apt quotation.

"I'll play beggar maid to no man's Cophetua!" she declared vehemently, and then, womanlike, she leaned her head down on her arms and wept the passionate, scalding tears of outraged pride and utter loneliness.

* * * *

Mr. Robert Hamilton stood irresolutely in the doorway of the florist's where he had been ordering violets for Kitty Harrington and red roses for the stunning brunette who was visiting the Demarests, and wondered what he should do next. It was not a decent time of day to be making calls, and he did not want to make calls anyway. He might easily hunt up some of the boys and demand amusement of them, but he was not so sure that he wanted the boys either.

In fact, Mr. Hamilton was in the lamentable position of not knowing what he did want.

A trim, well-fitted young person in brown came into his field of vision, headed his way. Little saucy spirals of gold-brown hair crept out from under the brown hat and framed cheeks which the keen January air had kissed into a glorious flame of color.

Hamilton's drowsing faculties awoke with a jump. He



went suddenly queer inside, as though he was quite hollow, and then he collected his scattered sensations and faced her as she came abreast of him. He had not seen her in a year and a half, nor had the faintest idea of her whereabouts.

"Oh, Mr. Hamilton, surely!"

A friendly little gloved hand came out with impulsive cordiality. It was like her to be so warm and genuine, and

Hamilton almost forget to let the hand go as he looked at her and had chaotic recollections of a light cedar boat with a girl in the stern, and frisky little gleaming curls under a trained nurse's cap. She had stuck so stubbornly to that uniform that he had never seen her in any other dress, and it was no wonder that this apparition took his breath.

"I never was so surprised in all my life!" he found himself repeating delightedly. "Where did you drop from, and what have you been doing with yourself all this time?"

"Walking up and down in the world, and going to and fro in it," she responded with her accustomed flippancy in the presence of irresponsible young men. "I continued with Mrs. Dimmick, you know, so our peregrinations took us over rather a wide field."

"Oh, still searching for the kind of a climate that doesn't come. By the way, how is my dear friend Mrs. Dimmick?"

"Dead, poor soul."

"Allah is merciful!" said Hamilton devoutly, from the depths of his recollections of the defunct lady's peculiarities, and a glimmer of a smile flickered for an instant in Miss Thatcher's eye.

An inspiration direct from the gods came upon Hamilton as she turned as though to continue on her way. He fitted his step to hers, having no intention of being dismissed so soon.

"May I walk with you? Thanks. By the way, it's just about lunch time, and I have no end of things to say to you. Won't you take lunch with me. Please now, it isn't Christian to turn me adrift in five stingy little minutes. There's Martin's just ahead. I wish you would."

An unholy mischief danced in the brown eyes, but to his gaze the lids were pensively lowered, and when they were raised, only the most childlike innocence was mirrored there.

"Are you sure it would be quite proper?"

"Proper! Why of course it would. Now don't say no. If you are only worrying about the proprieties, I'll go to the nearest telephone and scare up some kind of a chaperon."

He held his breath and prayed that she would decline this suggestion, which she did with refreshing promptness.

"Thank you, I don't care for the 'scared up' variety. Martin's let it be, then, and if I am roundly scolded for not appearing at lunch, I shall tell them it was all your fault."

"Are they disagreeable people that you are with now?" he asked sympathetically, and the convenient drop curtain went down again over her eyes.

"No," she said pensively. "Oh, no, I can't exactly say that they are. They really are very kind to me."

Over lunch, which he could scarcely eat for looking at her, Hamilton came to three inevitable conclusions. First, that she was prettier and more delightful than ever. Second, that if she had been a dozen trained nurses, nay, if she were a kitchen maid with sleeves rolled up to her pretty elbows, she would yet be like no other woman in the world, and the only one for him. Third, the man who says that he has of his own strong will cured himself of the aberration called love is a fool among fools and lieth unto himself.

From all of which it will be seen that Mr. Robert Hamilton was suffering from a very bad case of cardiac affection. He remembered ruefully the prompt manner in which she had cancelled his matrimonial claims that day of the lake, how he had followed her and her patient to their next abode, spurred by refusal into blind determination, and had made a glittering ass of himself by proposing twice in one day. On the evening of that same day he had left in some haste, much embittered with the world in general and determined from that hour to stand aloof in remote scorn from the wiles of the eternal feminine. To-day he had met her again for the first time since that last proposal, and at the pressure of her hand in friendly greeting he had subsided into driveling idiocy with the delight of seeing her again. Verily, philosophized Hamilton scornfully, man's resolves are putty, his heart of tinder and his brains of dough.

His philosophy was born of a warm recollection of those two refusals, and an uneasy consciousness that if he did not watch himself, he would be incurring the same disaster again before he knew it. He registered a stern resolve to be invulnerable, and on the heels of this came an inspiration huge with diplomacy and guile. He leaned forward confidentially.

"Do you remember hearing me speak of my chum, Will Russell? I played best man at his wedding last week. Happiest fellow you ever saw."

"I should hope so," said Miss Thatcher, with spirit. "He

would be an ungrateful wretch not to be happy on his wedding day."

"Oh we are all ungrateful wretches, so far as that goes." The embryo diplomat was looking thoughtfully down at the table, so soberly that the angels in heaven might well have bent sympathetic ears to listen. "We do not deserve one-tenth of the good fortune we get. If it were not that the gods in their wisdom so fashioned a woman's eye that it is blessedly myopic toward our weak points, this world would be a howling wilderness of bachelors."

"Very prettily said," admitted the lady with a ravishing smile. "I have never noticed that I have any tendency to that sort of myopia myself, but I dare say it is quite true. There is hope for you at least, for the conviction of sin is said to be the first step to reform."

Mr. Hamilton looked a trifle dubious, and played his next card with some perturbation of spirit.

"It is to be hoped so. To tell the truth—although I suppose you've guessed it already—I am seriously contemplating it myself."

"Contemplating what? Not reform, surely! Murder? Arson? Please don't be so mysterious; it is very agitating."

Miss Thatcher's eyes were very wide and bright, and it was not for the young man opposite her to know that when she tucked her hands in the shelter of her lap that way she was holding them tight together in a high nervous tension in which she would never have permitted a patient to indulge. He laughed a little, and lifted his eyes from their study of the table linen to permit himself a delightful inspection of hers.

"Oh, committing matrimony, you know; settling down, and all that sort of thing. Taking life a bit less as a comic opera and a little more as a serious proposition."

"Why how interesting!"

Oh man, man, that thou knowest not a danger signal even when thou fallest over it! Are the unending tomes of history to be of no avail, that a man can yet live who thinks to apply any one rule to any two women, to demonstrate by a mathematical formula, that elusive creation which an inscrutable Providence made to be the natural complement of his being?

"Yes, really, I have sized the matter up from all points, and I have decided that when all is said and done, there isn't a scrap of real romance about the whole thing. Marry-

ing has come to be a cold-blooded business proposition on both sides, and I am going to do the calm, sensible thing, and abide by the result as I should abide by any other legitimate business transaction."

"This is positively fascinating. Do tell me some more."

She need not have taken it so coolly, Hamilton thought, resentfully. It nettled him, and he went a little deeper into the mire of his doom.

"Why, yes, if you care to listen. It is awfully good of you to be so interested. You have heard of Powelson, haven't you? He is that grim old Chicago capitalist who is such a terror on the 'Change, and he has just bought a place in New York to see how they would like to live here."

Miss Thatcher's serious attention never wavered for a second, but there was a glint in her eye which lost not an expression of his face.

"Oh yes, certainly. Not to have heard of Mr. Powelson is as bad in these days as not having heard of Noah or Christopher Columbus. You are not going to marry Mr. Powelson, are you? Methinks the plot thickens."

"Oh, not so much," he protested deprecatingly. "You see, Mr. Powelson has a niece, a very charming young lady. I am due at a reception to-night, and I have every reason to believe that the young lady will be there."

Something in her face, incredulity struggling with mirth, made him pause uncomfortably. She was laughing at the priggish conceit of it, that was obvious. Ugh! he hated himself!

"Ah, I see, Mr. Hamilton. How stupid I have been. Is it too early to offer congratulations?"

"Oh, really, you know, I haven't met the lady yet. I'm just hoping to, to-night."

Her laugh rippled out lightly, and somehow he felt that he had shrunk at least a foot in five minutes. He grew warm around his collar, and cursed himself vehemently for being a thousand different varieties of fool, as that musical little mockery still sounded in his ears. What an ass, what a hopeless, pompous, egotistical ass she must think him! But he was in for it now.

"Your modesty does you credit," she said at last, her words trailing off into another little quivering sigh of laughter. "How flattered the lady should be! What is her name, by the way?"

"Why, Powelson, I suppose." Hamilton was racking his brain madly for some way out of the ridiculous position into which he had dragged himself, and he found it difficult to think connectedly.

"I see I am in for a confession," he said, reddening uncomfortably. Very few people could boast of having made Mr. Hamilton blush. "I suppose I might better have come out with it at first. Miss Thatcher, since I graduated from knickerbockers I have lost my head more or less over a good many girls, as most boys and men do from the time they are old enough to take notice. I loved one woman—and I lost her. Now I have deliberately picked out this lady, whom I have never seen, and have determined to make her my wife if I possibly can, and leave the element of love out of the matter entirely. I suppose you think it a small sort of business, this setting oneself to win out an heiress, but it is a legitimate combination of capital, and has the sanction of usage. Society smiles on it very indulgently. If I win the lady, I shall give my wife every honor and consideration that a man can give a woman, and we shall be the best of friends. I dare say I shall be as happy as any of them, and happier than most. People who do not start their matrimonial careers in a turmoil of excitement are less likely to end up in one."

Miss Thatcher dropped her napkin on the table with a certain definiteness of gesture, and looked at him inscrutably.

"Your plans are very interesting," she said lightly, but I fear you have left out one important factor, and that is the lady. No, thank you; you cannot see me home to-day. I am down-town on very serious business, and must visit the dressmaker forthwith."

Five minutes later, Hamilton turned back from putting her on a car and strode along very much out of humor with himself. As a diplomat he was a flat failure; that was obvious. He had killed his cause in trying to cure it, and this spirited, oddly independent beggar maid would never look at Cophetua again. Bah! he had been an idiot! Why, she wouldn't even give him permission to call on her!

* * * *

Mr. Hamilton made his way slowly through the chattering crush of the reception, feeling in a vilely bad humor with himself and the world at large. He was still thinking of

the egregious dolt he had made of himself that day, and the reflection was not soothing. A friend tapped him lightly on the arm.

"There come old Powelson and his party. Isn't the niece a dream?"

The thought of Powelson's niece was insufferable; it nauseated him. Hamilton glowered in the direction his friend indicated, obstinately determined to disapprove sweepingly of whatever he might see.

A tall, lean man with unruly gray hair and a patiently bored expression, was coming toward them, and with him were a well-kept middle-aged woman in a magnificent gown, and a Vision all in creamy white, with heavenly shoulders and a firm little chin uptilted the merest trifle, and a halo of frisky little gold-brown curls. As she passed Hamilton she inclined her head graciously toward him, smiled ever so little, and was gone.

Hamilton was cold inside and hot without. He scarcely heard his friend's chattering comments.

"Oh, you've met her, haven't you, you lucky rascal? Do you know the story? She's the daughter of a nobody-in-particular named Tom Thatcher. He and Powelson married sisters, when Powelson was pretty poor and Thatcher just comfortably fixed. Ten years later Powelson was 'way up, and one of his pet deals ruined Thatcher's best friend. Thatcher didn't love Powelson anyway, and he turned over every cent he owned to help pay his friend's debts. He was a queer duck. It was very fine in theory, you know, but he went sick shortly after that and was an invalid all the rest of his life, and first his wife and then his daughter also had to turn in to keep them all alive. He wouldn't take a cent from Powelson, nor let his family accept anything. Now this girl is an orphan—best thing that ever happened to her, and Powelson adopted her a few months ago. They say he thinks she is just about the finest thing that ever happened. She was jolly independent about being adopted, too."

Hamilton escaped and sought the most inconspicuous corner he could find. It was all up with him now. He had ruined himself finally and completely in her eyes, and there was nothing for him to do now but to keep his idiotic personality out of her sight. He almost groaned as he remembered some of the things he had said that day.

Half an hour later, Fate placed him directly at her elbow, and he braced himself to make the best of a very bad business.

"Oh, it is Mr. Hamilton," she said, with the faintest inflection of surprise, but her eyes were dancing with iniquitous mirth. He might well guess what was running in her mind.

"I suppose you despise me," he began, abjectly. "I know I talked like an egotistical idiot."

"You did," she agreed promptly.

"Far be it from me to contradict you. Have you laid any more plans since I last saw you?"

"Oh now, please don't. I know I deserve the very worst that you could possibly say to me, but——"

"You do indeed," she said severely, and apparently relented a little at the sight of the unmitigated glumness of his face. "By the way, I did get a scolding for running off to lunch with a wicked man."

As he was staring gloomily into space, he could not see that her eyes were dancing with mischief, and the laughter quivering unsounded on her lips.

"If you would only believe me when I say it was only an imbecile, dastardly, driveling scheme to—to——"

The laughter bubbled out now, irresistibly.

"To make me jealous!" she gurgled in smothered tones, struggling to regain some measure of gravity where so many curious eyes would surely be watching old Powelson's niece and heiress. Hamilton squirmed visibly, but a feeling of relief was beginning to steal over him like grateful warmth.

"I know you think me a gibbering idiot," he said, thankfully, "but if you only knew how glad I am that you don't believe me a blackguard as well."



"If I had believed you,"—and there was a little flash in her eye, although it died out and she smiled with truly angelic kindness—"do you think I would have ever permitted you to speak to me again? Oh, you did it so clumsily, I really could not help seeing through it after the first two or three sentences. Forgive me, but it was so funny!"

She was laughing again, but nevertheless Hamilton bounded in one leap from the nethermost depths into the warming sunshine of hope.

"Heaven be praised! I had thought there was nothing left for me to do but crawl into a hole and die. And you deliberately sat there and let me make a howling spectacle of myself! * * * If you look at me like that again, I shall propose on the spot."

"Don't!" she begged in trepidation, glancing anxiously about for listening ears. "If any one heard you, I should expire. Besides—guess who is here to-night, in the irony of Fate? Do you remember the young lady who quoted Tennyson once, as we went by?

"'In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way.'"

She whispered it lightly, but her voice caught a little between the lines as she remembered. The look in her eyes made his head whirl in the most strangely unmanageable way.

"Do I remember? I know it by heart! But she left out the best part of all—just this:

"So sweet a face, such angel grace
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua swore a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen." "





AR Conversations:

For the Benefit of Chauffeurs and their Employers, by Barry Pain*

PREFATORY NOTE.

I UNDERSTAND that many foreigners have recently come to England in connection with the manufacture, sale, and direction of motor-cars. Many of these have little or no knowledge of English beyond a few technical terms belonging to their craft. In consequence the foreign chauffeur is often seriously handicapped in his search for employment. I append a few useful sets of conversational phrases, which the intelligent Frenchman or enterprising Teuton may commit to memory and use as occasion requires.

I.—SEEKING EMPLOYMENT.

I understand it thoroughly. I know all about it. I am thirty years old. I have thirty-five years' experience.

I am always very careful. I have driven for the Prime Minister.

It is true that I have only one leg. The other was struck by lightning. I have never had a motor accident.

The slight abrasions on my face are due to a slip while hanging pictures. You can trust me implicitly.

Your offer is ridiculous, sir. I receive double those wages in Paris. I will not take it. I am worth more.

The English are thieves and assassins. Remember Fashoda! May the Boers live!

Good morning. Thank you very much. May the King Edward live! Ippippooray!

*From Black and White.

II.—THE EMPLOYER'S CAR.

You have a very bad car, sir. It is out of date. It is decayed. It is slow. It is dangerous.

It would be irksome to me to be found dead in a ten-acre field with such a car.

I could make a better car out of an old perambulator and a piece of string.

Permit me, sir, to show you the prospectus of a very good car. You see, it is illustrated. It is all guaranteed. There is nothing better.

If you mention my name you will receive a slight discount for cash.

No, sir; I do not receive any commission. I am doing this for my health.

It will give me much pleasure to sell your old car. It is worth very little, but I shall get the best price.

No, I shall not make a little bit out of it for myself.

I am surprised at you, sir.

I am not.

I am nothing of the kind

III.—ON THE ROAD.

The elderly rustic in the smock-frock is a disguised policeman.

The pale curate seated on the milestone is a disguised policeman.

The long-haired schoolgirl plucking flowers by the wayside is a disguised policeman.

There is a policeman behind this bush.

There is a policeman up that tree.

There is a policeman under that bridge.

There is a policeman in that ditch.

This is called the Ripley Road.

We must stop. He has timed us over the quarter-mile which he stepped this morning by the second-hand Waterbury of his great-aunt.

IV.—IN COURT.

He says that we were traveling three hundred and forty-eight miles an hour.

He says that he had to run after us and catch hold of the back wheel before we would stop.

The magistrate is not pleased with me.

It will be six months' hard labor.

I can do it on my head.

Pray, is not that the chauffeur of an eminent politician?

I wonder what he is doing here.

V.—RACING.

Hold tight!

Just shaved it!

Dog or baby?

Faster!

Go it!

A cyclist, I think.

He's not hurt us?

Can't stop.

Let her rip!

Stone wall or thick fog?

Boomp!

He was right then in supposing it to have been a wall.

Where is the apothecary? Can you direct me to a doctor of medicine? Is there no good undertaker here?

Be good enough to send a cart to clear all this up.

VI.—GENERAL.

I was with my late employer until the time of his death.

It should be complimentary mourning.

Third single, please.

Here we are at the pier. It will be a calm passage.

Motoring is at present in its infancy.

Good-by.





ORD Cumberwell's Lesson: The Story of What Befell a Secretary of State, by W. E. Cule.*

THE Earl of Cumberwell, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was in a most enviable condition of mind. Even the most prudent of men may sometimes feel it safe to laugh at Fortune, and such a moment had come for him. He toyed with the slip of paper which he had been reading, and smiled benignly through the window of his cab.

"Now," he thought, "everything is within my grasp. Nothing can possibly happen to mar my plans—nothing!"

He had every reason for his confidence. Our relations with two of the Powers had lately reached an extremely critical point, and he was now on his way to the third meeting of the Cabinet which had been summoned in the course of a week; but on this occasion he felt that he could meet his colleagues with a light heart, for he had just made himself master of the whole position. He had nothing but favorable intelligence to offer, and knew that the brilliant plan he intended to submit would be received with approbation. Then in the course of three days the country would ring with the story of his official success and the national triumph.

Always inclined to be sanguine and self-confident, the Minister felt now that he might safely disregard even the possibilities of circumstance. "And nothing," he repeated confidently, "can happen to spoil my plans. I can laugh at Fortune!"

The cab rolled into Downing Street, and he caught a glimpse of the crowd of idlers which usually collects on such an occa-

*From Chambers's Journal.

sion. He picked up his handkerchief, which lay upon the seat of the cab, and hurriedly restored it to its place. A moment later he alighted, his despatch-box in his hand.

Several persons saluted him as he crossed the pavement, and he responded courteously. In his present mood he was inclined to value those signs of popularity as good omens, and even as compliments fully deserved. In a few days the nation would declare him worthy of much more.

When he entered the room where the meetings were usually held, he found himself engaged for a few moments in greeting those members who had arrived before him. The entrance of another Minister presently enabled him to turn aside, and he laid his despatch-box down upon the table. When he had done this he drew a small bundle of papers from his breast-pocket.

With quick fingers he turned them over, once and again. Evidently none of them was what he required, for he made another search in his pocket. Finding it empty, he examined several other pockets without result, and even lifted his despatch-box to look beneath it. Then he paused to consider, and a sudden look of uneasiness appeared upon his face.

A moment later he was speaking to the attendant in the hall. "My cab," he said hurriedly; "is my cab gone?"

The man stepped to the door. One glance was enough.

"It is gone, my lord."

Lord Cumberwell advanced to the door himself, and glanced up and down the street. He seemed quite unconscious now of the gaze of those upon the pavement.

"You did not observe which way it went?"

"No, my lord. But perhaps some of those people noticed. Shall I inquire?"

The Minister gazed at the group of spectators. "No," he said; "it does not matter. Did you see the number of the cab or the name of the owner?"

"No, my lord. I am very sorry; but I did not notice."

"It does not matter," repeated Lord Cumberwell; and he returned at once to the room in which his colleagues were waiting.

The business of the meeting commenced soon afterwards, and everything went as he had anticipated. The value of his information was fully acknowledged, and the plans which he had mapped out to meet the crisis were received with cordial

approval and admiration. Not a word was said, not a suggestion was made, that tended to hamper his intentions or to cast a doubt upon his triumph, and the general attitude was one of confidence and congratulation. Yet no one could help observing that even in the moment of his success Lord Cumberwell seemed strangely anxious and uneasy.

This was due to a circumstance of which his companions were totally ignorant. Just before leaving his house that afternoon he had written out, upon the back of a letter addressed to himself, an outline of the plan he intended to lay before the Ministers. He had done this in a careless way, proposing to keep the slip for reference at the meeting. During his journey he had taken it out to look it over, and had probably laid it down upon the seat beside him. In the hurry of alighting he had forgotten to pick it up.

The consequent position was intensely disquieting. That slip of paper had contained information of the utmost importance with regard to the intentions of the Government towards Austria and Spain. If this information were made public too soon the situation would be complicated beyond hope, and every hard-won advantage lost. A whisper in London would be flashed across the Channel, and the enemy would find himself in a position to deliver an effective counter-blow. The folded letter, traveling about the city on the seat of a public conveyance, might fall into the wrong hands at any moment. Perhaps it had fallen into them already!

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Foreign Minister was uneasy during the meeting. For a time, it is true, he was obliged to concentrate his attention upon the work in hand; but at every opportunity his thoughts persisted in returning to that most unfortunate accident. He saw the conclusion of the business with sincere relief.

He was not the man to take a hazard if he could possibly secure himself, and he set to work at once to retrieve the situation. Proceeding in haste to Scotland Yard, he soon found himself face to face with an attentive and capable official. To this person he made everything clear.

"I must say at once," he explained, "that I am not able to help you in the least. The cab was not called from a stand, but was hailed as it was passing my door. Further, I did not notice the number of the vehicle or the name of the owner."

"Perhaps your lordship observed the driver," suggested the official. "Even the slightest description may prove useful."

The Earl gave all the information he had, and the points were carefully noted. Then he described the lost document.

"It was a letter," he said; "a printed circular, I believe from the National Club, on small-sized notepaper. My remarks were written in ink upon the back of the fly-sheet. They were very brief; but of course their brevity would present no obstacle to an intelligent reader."

"And there are so many intelligent readers just now," said the official.

"Exactly; four men out of every five would grasp the situation at a glance. My own name upon the first page would make everything clear to them."

The official made further notes. "I think I must tell you what I fear," proceeded the Earl, anxious to leave nothing unsaid that might strengthen his efforts. "It is simply that the paper may fall into the hands of some one whose interest it would be to publish it. That would be fatal."

The official saw this clearly enough. Probably both he and the Minister had in mind at that moment the name of a daily newspaper to which such a discovery would be an absolute godsend—the Hour. At the same time he suggested that there was no reason to despair. It was quite possible that the person who found the slip would be some one quite unable to see its value, some one who would throw it away and think no more about it. There was also the chance that an ignorant cabman would cast it out with the dust, or that the paper itself might slip to the floor of the cab and so escape observation.

These suggestions were only slightly comforting. A cab passing through the Westminster district was less likely to be hailed by a so-called outsider than by some indolent but intelligent clubman, some hasty journalist, or some inquiring member of the Opposition. In either case the result would be much the same.

"Very well, my lord," said the official. "What you say is certainly true. I need not assure you, however, that we shall do our best. Any result shall be made known to you immediately."

"Thank you," said Lord Cumberwell, rising. "I shall be

at the Foreign Office for the next two hours. After that I shall be at my own house, 41 Baynton Square."

"Very good, my lord."

The interview over, the Earl drove to the Foreign Office, where he set in operation the plan which had been approved by his colleagues. He did this with the painful knowledge that before many hours had passed the whole design might be thrown into utter and shameful confusion. For the present however, there was nothing to do but to go straight on and await events.

He then reached the house in time for dinner, a quiet and informal repast at which his private secretary was his only companion. Indeed, everything connected with the Baynton Square establishment might be described as quiet and informal, for the Earl had no family, and had chosen his residence and arranged his household with a simple regard for convenience, comfort, and proximity to the Government offices and the Houses of Parliament. His home and his heart alike were in a northern county, and he only came to town when his presence was absolutely necessary. In every sense, therefore, his sojourn in the Square was purely a convenience, and there was no sign of state in connection with it.

He did not disclose his difficulty to his companion. He was naturally reserved, and the Honorable Philip Lombard was quite a new acquisition as a private secretary. Further, he felt painfully conscious that his action had been foolishly, criminally careless, so that it was no pleasant subject to discuss. For these reasons he kept silence, dreading the worst but hoping for the best.

After dinner an adjournment was made to the study. There a sheaf of correspondence was dealt with, and after a while the secretary retired with his papers. When he had gone, the Earl turned to an uninterrupted survey of the position.

As was his custom when alone with his books, he had divested himself of his somewhat imposing evening attire, and had slipped on an old and comfortable garment which his valet was accustomed to describe contemptuously as his "study coat." He had been quite unable, however, to throw off the doubts and fears which had haunted him since that unfortunate incident occurred. Unable to sit still, he paced the room restlessly, working himself rapidly into a fever of apprehension and self-reproach.

Again and again he counted the probable cost: the public outcry, the Opposition laughter, the general excitement. He thought of the leader which would appear in the Hour—a leader which the editor, possibly, was at that moment engaged in writing, with that priceless slip on the desk before him. He found himself picturing the startling placard which would face the public in the morning, the sensational headlines on the fifth page. He tried to picture the faces of his colleagues when they should discover that the finest diplomatic triumph of the decade had been ruined by an inexcusable blunder. The thing was awful!

In his growing nervousness he strained his ears to catch sounds from without—footsteps of Prettiman in the hall, the distant clang of the doorbell. He had given orders that only messengers from Scotland Yard or from the Foreign Office should be admitted; but now he almost regretted these instructions. On ordinary occasions they were necessary for his own protection; but to-night even the incursion of a troop of interviewers would be something of a relief.

At that point a brilliant idea flashed upon his mind, and brought him to a sudden pause in the middle of the room.

What if some one should bring back that paper? It might have been picked up by an altogether harmless person, one whose first idea would be to return it to its owner. As his name and address were both upon it, such a person would proceed at once to Baynton Square. And then?—and then the placid but inflexible Prettiman, acting on his instructions, would bar the way, and turn the welcome visitor from the door. Perhaps he had done so already!

He must be told at once. Lord Cumberwell stepped in the direction of the door; but at that moment he heard once more the clang of the bell. He paused and listened.

It was an unfortunate pause. He heard Prettiman cross the hall to the door, and then he heard a murmur of voices. It lasted some moments, for the visitor was evidently importunate; but Prettiman at last prevailed, and the door was closed.

Lord Cumberwell met the man as he came back. "What was it?" he asked hastily. "Who called?"

Prettiman was taken by surprise. "It was a lady, my lord," he stammered. "She had a letter——"

"What!" cried the Earl.

"A letter, my lord. She——"

Lord Cumberwell strode to the door, threw it open, and stood on the steps without. Bareheaded and excited, he glanced to right and left.

"Which way did she go?"

"I don't know, my lord. I did not notice."

Lord Cumberwell blamed heavily, at that moment, the man's stupidity and his own unfortunate pause in the study. But just then he saw a woman's figure pass under the light of a lamp some little distance away; otherwise the Square seemed quite deserted. Turning into the hall, he snatched up a hat which was lying on the table, crushed it upon his head, and went out in pursuit.

Prettiman, filled with amazement, was left in the hall alone. He realized that his master had gone out in his study coat, a thing which had never happened before during the whole period of his service.

Such was the way in which Lord Cumberwell went out to his humiliating lesson. If he had paused to reflect at that critical moment, he might have been saved; he would have ordered Prettiman to recall the visitor, or he would have assured himself, at least, that there was misapprehension on his own part. But his last pause had been so ill-timed that he saw only danger in another, and he was in such a state of nervous irritation and excitement that he could not act with his usual caution. His only thought was to overtake the woman and to recover the paper at the earliest possible moment.

By this time, however, she had gone some little distance. He could see that she was walking rapidly, making, apparently, for a short street called Baynton Gardens, which led from the Square into a large and moderately busy thoroughfare. He quickened his steps, but without visible advantage. He did not care to call, and he could not forget himself so far as to run. In that point his natural dignity did not forsake him.

A minute later the woman turned the corner. There was a lamp at the corner, and the Earl caught a better glimpse of her as she passed beneath it. As far as he could see, she was a person of medium height, of somewhat slender build, and dressed in dark-colored garments. As soon as she had turned the corner he again quickened his steps. If she passed beyond Baynton Gardens he might lose her altogether.

He had not traveled with so much haste for some time, and before he reached the corner himself he was almost breathless. Then he began to see the hopelessness of his attempt to overtake her. She was already half-way down the gardens.

What was to be done? Beyond he heard the murmur of traffic and saw numerous lights. The woman seemed to be increasing her speed, and if he intended to stop her he must call.

He prepared to shout. The place was very quiet, and that was an advantage; but he suddenly realized that he had not shouted for a considerable time, and that the act required some courage. However, there was no time to lose, and so he made the effort.

"Hi!"

It was not an effective shout. It did not by any means startle the Gardens, as he had almost expected it to do. In fact, no one seemed to hear it but himself, and the woman held on her way. He tried again.

"Hi!" he cried, panting. "Hi!"

It was useless. The noises of the thoroughfare beyond were growing louder, and his feeble shout never reached its object. Two or three moments later that object had passed out of Baynton Gardens, and it was too late to shout at all. She paused at the corner, and then vanished abruptly.

Her pause had given the Earl just a chance, and he felt sure that he would not lose her. When he reached the corner he saw that an omnibus had pulled up a few yards farther on, apparently to receive passengers. One of these was a woman of medium height, dressed in black.

Lord Cumberwell saw this figure and did not trouble to look in any other direction. It was necessary to make another effort, and he gave a last shout. Several passers-by heard it, and stared at him; some one laughed, but some one else whistled to the omnibus conductor. Directly afterwards the Earl, breathing hard, was at the foot-board.

"Room for one inside," said the conductor.

Lord Cumberwell had not intended it; but as the woman had gone in, he could do nothing but follow her or give up his quest. No thought of giving it up occurred to him, so he entered the vehicle and took the only seat that was left. Yet he had a vague feeling that he was going farther in this affair than he had meant to go. Everything was moving in a hurry.

The bell rang; the omnibus started with a jerk. He thrust aside his feeling of helplessness and a dim sense of the absurdity of his position, and thought of the lost document. Before that thought all else faded into insignificance.

He glanced at his fellow-passengers, but did not examine them closely. They seemed to be a miscellaneous party, mostly of women. On the other side, and two or three places away, sat the woman he wanted, and from the moment he saw her he paid little attention to any one else.

She was still a young woman, and was quite neatly dressed. Her face was ordinary, but not at all unpleasant in expression. "In fact," said the Earl to himself. She seems a good-natured person. She is just the person to return a lost document to its owner at the first opportunity."

The woman carried in her hand a small ornamental bag of crocodile leather, and his eyes fastened upon it eagerly. He had not the slightest doubt that it contained the paper which he would have given so much to recover. It was impossible to speak now, because he had no intention of letting half-a-dozen omnibus passengers get scent of this affair. Neither this woman nor any of the others appeared to recognize him, and he could not help feeling slightly surprised at the fact. One might have supposed that his face was familiar enough to at least one in ten of the London public.

At that point he found that the woman with the hand-bag had become aware of his scrutiny, and that she was looking at him in a questioning way. It was certainly unwise to make himself remarkable, so he transferred his attention to another passenger. This was a stout, middle-aged man in the farther corner, who was endeavoring to read a copy of the *Evening News* by the light of the lamp. The vehicle jolted so heavily that reading must have been impossible; but he continued to hold the paper before his face. The Earl regarded his efforts with natural interest until he saw that the man was only using the paper to conceal a face full of amusement.

Then he saw more. Two other people in the omnibus were smiling in the same furtive way. Two others, who were not smiling, were looking at him curiously. What did it mean?

He soon discovered its meaning. While he was wondering, he suddenly caught a glimpse of his own reflection in the glass before him, over the shoulder of one of the passengers. It must be his own reflection, because he recognized the features;

but what was that curious object which surmounted his face? A hat—could it be a hat? Then, with a shock, the truth came home. In his haste to leave the house he had caught up some one else's hat. It was, in fact, the hat of his private secretary, a soft, gray, almost shapeless affair which he had often remarked with strong disfavor.

The general amusement was natural enough. He had never dreamed that a man could look so absurd simply by a change of hats. As far as he could see in the faint reflection, his whole appearance was subtly but certainly altered, and his usually sober, grave, and statesman-like demeanor had been changed for one which was only to be described as rakish and sporting.

His first sensation was one of annoyance and discomfort. His feeling of self-respect and dignity had received a shock; but in a few moments he perceived that the matter had a brighter side. He did not wish to be recognized while on this quest, and Mr. Lombard's hat made recognition less probable. His discomfort wore off by degrees, and when a diversion came he was almost himself again.

"Fares, please," said the conductor.

Fares? The Earl started, and began to search his pockets hastily. By the most fortunate of chances, he found in one of them a stray shilling. It was while searching for it that he noticed the coat he wore, that comfortable but ancient garment which had not seen the streets for years. Well, it did not matter—he was all the less likely to be singled out as a Minister of State!

"Orl the w'y?" asked the conductor, looking steadily at the private secretary's hat.

"Ye-es," answered Lord Cumberwell.

He received his ticket and the change. Although he had agreed to go all the way, he had not the slightest idea of what that way was. His knowledge of London outside Baynton Square was extremely vague.

They jolted on for twenty minutes, and he saw that they had left the better residential quarters well behind. Once they changed horses, and halted more than once to deposit a passenger on the pavement. Still the woman in black held fast to her corner. Apparently she, too, was going all the way.

They passed through another business thoroughfare, and

turned into a series of quiet streets, consisting of what seemed to be a very modest class of villa property. He was just wondering how much longer the journey would take when some one called:

"Stop here, please."

It was the woman in black. The conductor signalled, and the omnibus stopped. Briskly the woman descended, and as soon as she had reached the road her pursuer also prepared to alight. He was not precipitate, because he did not wish to make his object noticeable; for this reason he slightly delayed the bus and attracted the unfavorable attention of the conductor.

"Yer not goin' orl the w'y, then?" said that gentleman crisply.

The Earl did not answer, but alighted.

"Orl right," said the conductor, with increased irony. "We don't charge any hextra for gettin' out 'ere!" And then, with a noisy jerk, the horses moved on.

Lord Cumberwell found himself standing at a corner, beneath a lamp. The woman with the hand-bag had turned off into a rather dark street containing small villas of the kind he had already noticed. She was walking rapidly, and had now gone some distance. He hurried in pursuit.

At first he gained a little, but then she began to walk more quickly. He fancied that she had observed him, and the therefore decided that it would be better to speak out. This ridiculous business had gone far enough, and it only required a few words of explanation to end it.

"Excuse me!" he said loudly.

The woman did not turn; instead, she seemed to increase her speed.

"Excuse me," said Lord Cumberwell again; "just a moment——"

There was no satisfactory response. But the woman positively began to run.

Puzzled and irritated, Lord Cumberwell fell back a little, and the space between them increased. Just then they were met by a policeman, who looked curiously after the hurrying woman. She turned a corner abruptly, and he then transferred his attention to the Earl. His scrutiny was somewhat close and careful.

Lord Cumberwell reached the corner just in time to see the

woman enter a house five or six doors away. His irritated feelings thrust aside the suggestion that he had better give up the quest at this awkward point, and he walked on till he reached the house. She had entered in such haste that both the gate and the door had been left wide open behind her. After a moment's pause he advanced to the door.

When he saw a narrow hallway, with the stairs facing it. A narrower passage ran beside the stairs to a colored-glass door, which was closed. On the other side of this door was a lighted room, evidently the kitchen of the house.

"This is absurd!" thought Lord Cumberwell; "most absurd!"

He referred chiefly to the curious action of the woman in running away when he had addressed her. There was nothing for it now but to knock at the door and interview her formally. He looked for a knocker or a bell, but found neither; consequently he was obliged to knock with his knuckles. There was no reply. His knock was drowned in a noise of voices which reached him from behind the colored-glass door; and before he could knock again he heard a sound behind him which at that moment was most unwelcome. It was the heavy, measured tread of the policeman.

He remembered the close scrutiny which he had received just before, and guessed that the man had turned back to keep him in sight. The fright of the woman and his own excited appearance gave sufficient room for inquiry, and he saw that complications were imminent. What was to be done?

A prudent man would have awaited events, and knocked again; but he was in anything but a prudent mood. Perhaps he recollected at that instant that he was a Minister of State, and that he need not always act by ordinary commonplace rules of conduct. He stepped quietly into the house, and pushed the door after him.

Lord Cumberwell stood immovable, listening anxiously. The footsteps approached, slowly and more slowly as they drew nearer. Opposite the door they paused, but only for a moment.

Then he drew a breath of relief. As soon as the policeman had gone to a reasonable distance he would carry out his plan. He would return to the other side of the door, and knock until he received an answer.

Still listening to the departing footsteps, he looked around

him curiously. From the kitchen he heard the voice of a child, apparently a boy. Just before him, on the left, was the open door of a room, probably a small sitting-room; and opposite this entrance was a hat and umbrella stand. Lying upon this stand was something he had seen before. It was a small hand-bag made of crocodile leather. There was no need for a second glance, for it was certainly the one which the woman had carried. He remembered his conclusions in the omnibus—that it contained his priceless slip of paper!

Here was the end of his trouble just within his grasp. Instantly he saw that he could avoid an interview with the frightened woman, and could avoid also the bother which would be caused by a revelation of his identity. The way he saw was short, simple, and immensely easy. He could open the bag, take out the document, and vanish without a sign.

In justice to the Earl, it must be said here that he really did hesitate for a brief while; but the temptation was too strong. Perhaps, too, his fall may be regarded as a simple result of his long diplomatic training. He stepped forward silently, and laid his hands upon the bag. Hastily and nervously he tried to open it, but it was in vain that he fumbled with the clasps and metal work. He had never touched such an article before, so it is not surprising that he failed; and while he was still engaged with it he heard heavy footsteps cross the floor of a room above him and approach the landing above the stairs. Some one was coming down.

The position was an extremely delicate one. There was hardly time to think, much less to escape through the front door. The Earl of Cumberwell saw one alternative which looked promising. Still clasping the hand-bag, he stepped backward into the doorway of the sitting-room.

He was just in time. A man came heavily down the stairs, and paused at the bottom. Lord Cumberwell moved silently farther back among the shadows of his hiding-place. Then he heard the man advance to the front-door, which he closed and fastened noisily. After that he returned, and strode towards the kitchen.

"Dear me!" thought Lord Cumberwell, perplexed; "he has fastened the door. I wonder whether it will be easy to open."

There was worse to come. When the man reached the kitchen he addressed some one in a loud tone.

"Laura," he said, "you left the front door open."

"Did I?" asked a woman's voice. "Well, it was no wonder. I was so frightened——"

At that word the colored-glass door was closed, and the voices were lost. Again Lord Cumberwell breathed more freely, for the danger seemed to have passed. He must make one more effort to open the bag, and if he failed this time there was only one thing to do—he must carry it away with him.

It was his mistake, at this point, that he did not pause to consider; but the whole affair had been so hasty that consideration has scarcely come into it at all. If he had paused to think now, he would have seen that if the lost document was at this time in the handbag it would be just as well to leave it there. In that simple hiding-place it was safe alike from the members of the Opposition and the editor of the Hour; while, seeing the nature of its surroundings, it was not likely to fall into the wrong hands soon enough to work harm. But Lord Cumberwell did not think of this, and saw nothing but the necessity of getting it into his possession. He was excited, and in no mood for sensible calculation.

So he fumbled again with the fastenings, losing in this way his only opportunity for escape. Scarcely had he worked for ten seconds when there broke upon his ear simultaneously the sound of the hurried opening of the kitchen door, the voice of the man, and his footsteps in the passage. All these sounds were full of haste and anger.

"I'll precious soon see," said the man as he reached the door; "and if I find him there, I'll just let him know it. You may take my word for that!"

The woman followed him up the passage. There were other footsteps also, probably those of the boy. Lord Cumberwell held his breath.

"I can't see any one," said the man, speaking from the gate. "There's only a policeman within sight. What was the ruffian like?"

"He was rather stout," answered the woman, and clean shaven. He had a soft gray hat on, and he was a queer-looking figure altogether."

A queer-looking figure altogether! The description only added an extra pang to the discomfort which the listener was enduring already. This was most humiliating.

"Well, I'll walk to the corner," said the man doubtfully.

"Just wait a minute."

His steps receded rapidly, and his wife was left at the door. For an instant Lord Cumberwell thought that this might be his chance; but he gave up the hope. There was no time; and besides, he could not summon up courage to face such a situation. He stood mute, clasping the bag in his hands.

The man returned. "I can't see any one," he said. "Perhaps he cleared away when he saw you enter the house."

They came in, closing the iron gate as they did so. The man passed down towards the kitchen, evidently rather disappointed. "You can lock the door," he said, pausing on the way. "It won't be wanted again to-night."

His wife remained behind and turned the key in the front door with a click which was distinctly audible to one person near at hand; then, on her way to the kitchen, she paused at the door of the room in which the Earl was standing. It was her usual habit, and one which she had in common with many good housewives, to give a last look round before locking up for the night. She paused on the threshold, thrust the door back a little, and peered into the room.

Lord Cumberwell had no time to retire out of view. He could only stand in his place, helpless and confounded. The woman gave a start and a scream.

"James! James! Quick!"

With the cry she ran back, and her startled husband met her in the middle of the passage. To his amazement, he saw a large, portly figure emerge from the sitting room and advance towards them. The woman screamed again.

"I really beg your pardon," began Lord Cumberwell. "I am sorry to have alarmed you——"

His stately apology was interrupted. "What are you doing in this house?" demanded the householder with vigor.

"I will explain," said Lord Cumberwell hastily. "I will explain. The fact is, my dear sir—the fact is, I came in to see your wife—this lady."

It was, at the least, an unfortunate way of putting it. The woman gave an exclamation of amazement, and her husband stared. He was a man of heavy but athletic build, one who would evidently stand no nonsense.

"To see my wife!" he echoed, with darkening face.

"Oh James!" gasped his wife tremulously; "it's the man

I told you of—the one who stared at me in the bus, and then followed me here. And look—see what he has in his hand!”

Every one looked, the Earl included. Clasped tightly in his right hand was the little handbag of crocodile leather!

It was an awful combination of circumstances, and he was so utterly taken aback that he could not find a word to utter. It was the husband that spoke first.

“Charlie,” he said, addressing his son, a boy of about ten years, “there’s a policeman up the street. Run round through the back door and fetch him.”

The boy disappeared at once, before Lord Cumberwell had recovered his presence of mind. Directly afterwards he found strength to utter a horrified protest.

“My dear sir——” he began, advancing.

“If you move another step forward,” said the householder calmly, “I’ll knock you down.”

The Earl stopped, aghast. “My dear sir,” he began again, with an effort, “you must let me explain. I came here to see your wife. She called at my house little more than an hour ago.”

“Called at your house?” interrupted the man.

“Oh James,” cried his wife, “what an awful untruth! I haven’t called at any house—you know I haven’t.”

“What!” said Lord Cumberwell. “Did you not call at my house this evening with a letter?”

“Your house? Why, I haven’t called at any house. I don’t know your house.”

This was a blow indeed. It had entirely failed to suggest itself to the Earl that he might have made a mistake at the beginning, that this woman in black was not the woman who had called at his house. Now he perceived, with a feeling of despair, that he had been following up the wrong person all along.

He was bewildered and dismayed by this new turn in affairs; but his captors saw only guilt in his face. “Perhaps you can think of a better story than that,” suggested the man offensively. “I don’t think it will do.”

“Sir!” cried Lord Cumberwell indignantly.

“Please don’t ‘sir’ me. What about the handbag?”

Things were growing worse. “I—I thought the letter was in it,” explained the guilty Minister. “I was about to look That is all.”

"Indeed! Laura, what is in that bag of yours?"

"Nothing but my purse," answered the woman quickly.

There was a disagreeable pause. The Earl glanced at the door, but there was no chance in that direction. Then he made one final effort.

"It's a mistake," he began—"a foolish and ridiculous mistake. You don't know who I am."

"Never mind that. The police will know, no doubt. They'll be here in a minute."

It was a hopeless affair, and the Earl groaned in his heart. For a few minutes he contemplated the idea of taking the two entirely into his confidence, but was forced to relinquish it. His case was already prejudiced beyond recovery, as far as these people were concerned: they would regard his story as a wild fable, and he would simply be exposing himself to ridicule without any good effect. Perhaps it would be best, after all, to wait for the police. Then things would come right.

The wait was not a long one. A back door was suddenly thrown open, and a constable appeared, with the boy at his side. To the Earl's dismay, this was the officer whose conduct so short a time before had brought all this misfortune upon him—the one whose suspicious scrutiny had forced him to enter the house. Circumstances were inexorable.

"Well?" said the constable, striding up the narrow passage in a leisurely way. "What have we here?"

"A burglar!" cried the woman excitedly.

"Something of that kind," added her husband.

"It is a mistake," protested the Earl—"a most absurd mistake."

The officer looked at him closely. "Ah!" he said; "it's you, is it? I had my suspicions."

"What!" cried the householder; "do you know him?"

The constable gave him a wise smile. "I saw him enter this house a little while ago, and I thought then there was something queer about him. How did you get hold of him?"

"We found him hiding in that front-room, and he had my wife's hand-bag. That's burglary, isn't it?"

The officer took out his note-book. "It's bad enough, anyhow," he replied. "It's being found on enclosed premises—namely, a front sitting-room—for the purpose of committing a felony." Then, turning to the Earl, he said, "You'd better keep all your talk for the inspector. And I warn you

that anything you say may be used as evidence against you."

This was horrible. The man's tone and manner were so galling that the Earl's last grain of patience vanished. His dismay, irritation, and bewilderment, his humiliation and his contempt, all became merged in a sudden rage. The blood rushed to his brows, and in the heat of the moment one hasty word escaped him. He had not used such a word before since his old electioneering days. He regretted it the moment it had gone; but his regret was swallowed up in renewed wrath when he saw the man calmly enter it in his note-book.

A few minutes afterward a small party set out for the local police station. Lord Cumberwell walked between a watchful householder and an equally watchful constable. He had demanded a cab, but as he had nothing wherewith to pay for it, his demand had been ignominiously refused. It was now quite late, however, and the streets of that modest suburb were practically deserted. Undisturbed by the attentions of any curious foot passengers, he tried to give his thoughts to a survey of the position.

This was a difficult matter. The events which had brought him to this pass had been so natural in one sense, yet so extraordinary in another, and the situation in which he stood was so painful and yet so ridiculous, that he scarcely knew how to regard it. Indignation and rage were succeeded by a strong sense of the absurdity of things, mingled with a vague perception of some possible consequences. If this affair got into the papers it might prove more serious for him than a premature publication of State secrets. It would be received with universal laughter; it would be exaggerated and misstated in every possible way; it would subject him to the banter of the whole nation. It would probably bring about his sudden retirement from public life.

Here was a suggestive comment upon his bright visions of that very afternoon. Well, the only thing to be done was to wait, and to make the best of it. Surely the business could not go much further in its present ridiculous course. As soon as he came face to face with the inspector all would come straight again; but he must, above all, try to keep the matter hidden from the world at large.

As for the lost document, it had receded into the background

for the time. It was probably in Fleet Street by now; but he could not help it. There was something else to think of!

When they reached the station they passed into a room where two police clerks were engaged at their desks. In a few moments the inspector made his appearance, a sharp, severe-looking officer, whose brief manner was anything but encouraging. He gave the group a quick, comprehensive glance, paying special attention to the prisoner. The Earl tried to look dignified, forgetting the baneful influence of Mr Lombard's hat.

The inspector did not recognize him, and it gave Lord Cumberwell some sense of humility to reflect that through his whole adventure no one had guessed who he was. The Minister of State might have been a dustman for all that the people of London knew. As a matter of fact, however, there were many excuses for the blindness of the inspector and those about him; for instead of the dignified and clean-cut nobleman known to the House of Lords, the clubs, and the illustrated papers, they saw only a guilty-looking person attired in a frock-coat that was sadly worn and ancient, and wearing a hideously unsuitable selection in hats. As for the face, Lord Cumberwell had nothing remarkable to show in that direction, while he affected neither a heavy stoop like the late Premier, a monocle like the chief Unionist leader, nor an unmistakable collar like that great Commoner who had lately died. In short, there was nothing at all in his person to render him a favorite with the cartoonists and a familiar figure to the public eye. So the inspector, after one long look, turned to the others and asked for the story.

It was given plainly enough, the constable speaking first and laying emphasis upon the fact that the prisoner, when arrested, had indulged in profanity. Then the householder, James Ellis by name, gave an account of what had happened previously.

In this account Lord Cumberwell saw arrayed against him an appalling mass of evidence. He had, it seemed, followed Mrs. Ellis into an omnibus, and had immediately begun to annoy her by a prolonged and impudent scrutiny, paying special attention to the little hand-bag she carried. Her natural suspicion became alarm when he left the omnibus at the same corner, and followed her homewards; but alarm had changed to panic when he had addressed her from behind.

She had immediately broken into a run, reaching her house at last in an exhausted condition. The prisoner, taking advantage of the open door, had stepped into the house and concealed himself in a front-room. There he had been discovered later, holding in his hand the bag which contained Mrs. Ellis's purse; and he had failed to account for his conduct except by a story which was absurd and false in every particular.

Such was the plain and straightforward narrative of Mr. Ellis. When the Earl heard the last words his anger returned. It would have been better if he had kept his temper; but it was not in him to hear such a charge without indignation. He protested therefore, and soon found himself in further difficulties.

"My story was quite true," he cried angrily. "it was true from beginning to end. I can explain everything. I mistook this woman for one who had called at my house this evening, and had failed to see me. She bore a letter which I wanted, so I followed her directly she had gone. I must have lost sight of the proper person, and mistaken this man's wife for her."

The inspector listened without emotion. When he had considered the matter he put a sudden question:

"Where is your house?"

It was most unfortunate. The answer was upon Lord Cumberwell's lips; but he held it back. If he gave it, his hopes of secrecy would be destroyed in one word. And while he hesitated, the face of the inspector hardened.

"Where is your house?" he repeated briefly.

The Earl recovered himself. "Give me a word privately," he said in the most dignified manner he could assume. "I have no objection to telling you; but I do not wish this ridiculous affair to become public property."

There was a pause. The police clerks winked at each other and smiled. Perhaps they had heard similar appeals before. Mr. Ellis then made an observation in a sarcastic tone.

"He will tell you privately, inspector. No doubt he will also tell you privately why he hid himself in my house instead of knocking at the front door, like any ordinary man!"

That was an effective thrust. The inspector looked at Lord Cumberwell with a kind of grim inquiry. "Answer that if you can," his look seemed to say; and Lord Cumberwell saw that he could not answer it. To say that he had slipped into the

house to avoid the policeman would make an ugly case look still uglier.

"I can explain," he repeated, "if you will give me a moment in private."

But the inspector, without reply, turned to a desk, and began, apparently, to make notes of the charge. Lord Cumberwell, glaring upon those around him, strove to keep his rage under control. He saw that in this lay his only hope of evading the toils which seemed to be closing about his feet. Striving to calm himself, he waited for another opportunity.

"What is your name?" asked the inspector suddenly.

"I am ready to tell you in private," answered the Earl after a brief pause.

"And you still refuse your address?"

"I have told you already that I do not refuse it, sir."

These replies were given with a great attempt to be firm yet courteous; but the smiles of the company were painfully apparent. Lord Cumberwell felt rather than saw them, and tried to remember who he really was—a Minister of State, whose name was almost a household word in the country; and all this was taking place within a mile or two of his own house! It was worse than an absurdity—it was an outrage. Drawing himself to his full height, he said to the officer:

"Let me warn you, sir, that you are doing a foolish thing. Having refused me an opportunity to explain, you must be responsible for any consequences, however serious. Let me ask you to do one thing before it goes too far. Let me send for some one who will answer for me and whose word will satisfy you."

The inspector gave no answer for a moment, and appeared to take no notice of the words. But when he had finished the sheet he showed that he had been considering them. Perhaps the prisoner's insistence had impressed him, though the case against the man was a perfectly clear one.

"Well," he said curtly, "who is the person you speak of?"

The Earl considered rapidly. It was his first impulse to send for his secretary, who would probably still be found at Baynton Square. He saw, however, that this step would be fatal to his desire for secrecy, for if Mr. Lombard were named everything must come out. He tried to think of some one else, and immediately remembered a close personal friend, who was also one of his colleagues in the Government. This

was a man who would do perfectly, and whose very name ought to be a sufficient guarantee for any one. He was also so prudent, so imperturbable, that no surprise, no ridiculous discovery, would have power to disturb his equanimity or move him to utter a word of astonishment. He would come at once, and he would not let the secret escape.

"The person I speak of," he said calmly, "is the Marquis of Leyshon. His house is in St. James's Gardens."

His words created a sensation. Even the inspector was amazed.

"The Marquis of Leyshon!" he echoed.

"The Minister for War!" added Mr. Ellis.

"Yes," said Lord Cumberwell, "the Minister for War."

There was a silence, and then the sensation had passed. Mr. Ellis smiled oddly, and the police clerks bent over their work. They were beginning to see that this prisoner provided an interesting case, but he was now going into the clouds. This was too much!

But as soon as the inspector had given the matter a moment's consideration he appeared to see it in a different light. He gave Lord Cumberwell what may be described as one of his official glances, keen, quick, and searching. Somehow he could not conceal the fact that he was impressed, and his next remark confirmed this. The tone was even thoughtful and considerate.

"I think," he said, "that I must consult some one else. Please take seats and wait. I shall be back in five minutes."

He signed to the policeman, and whispered a few words to him at the door; then he went out, leaving the man standing where they had spoken. The police clerks turned to glance at the Earl with renewed interest, Mr. Ellis with some surprise. This turn in events had taken them aback.

Lord Cumberwell, however, was filled with relief. He took a seat with his back to Mr. Ellis, and congratulated himself. This awful affair was closing at last; he had been exceedingly lucky to think of Lord Leyshon. The inspector had changed his tone at once, and even the constable, from his place at the door, seemed to regard his late captive with something like respect, something like apprehension. Well, they had been very stupid, very discourteous; but the affair had been a horrible misunderstanding from the first. There was some excuse for them.

He waited impatiently, wondering whom the inspector had gone to consult. Perhaps it was a superior residing in the neighborhood—perhaps a magistrate. Then he began to think of the lost document again. Somehow recent incidents had minimized the seriousness of his loss, and he could regard it more reasonably. Perhaps the paper was now in the hands of the police, or perhaps the Scotland Yard man had been right after all. In any case, the chances seemed now to be all in his favor. He could hope that the thing was really lost, and that it would not reappear. In three days his *coup* would be made, and he could afford to laugh at every one.

At that point he really did laugh, to the amazement of all around him. Then he recollected his position, and looked up. The policeman at the door was gazing at him with visible apprehension, and the others with surprise. He sobered down immediately.

Just then the inspector returned with a companion. The policeman whispered to him as he came in, glancing sideways at the Earl. The inspector nodded meaningly.

His companion was an elderly gentleman of benign and cultured appearance. The Earl decided at once that he was a local magistrate, and prepared for a gentle examination. He rose to meet the stranger.

"Good-evening," said the elderly gentleman pleasantly.

"Good evening," said the Earl with dignity.

"I understand," said the elderly gentleman, "that there is—well, a little difficulty, and that you wish to have some one sent for—in fact, the Marquis of Leyshon."

Lord Cumberwell inclined his head with increased graciousness. This person's scrutiny was as keen as the inspector's, but it was kindly, sympathetic, benevolent. There was a pause, while he seemed to be considering further questions.

"Unless I am mistaken," he went on, in an almost confidential tone, "the Marquis is a personal friend of yours."

"He is," answered Lord Cumberwell with some surprise.

"And I suppose," said the elderly gentleman, "that you are acquainted with other eminent personages—the Premier, for instance."

Lord Cumberwell stared. The words had been spoken softly—so softly that they had scarcely been heard even by the inspector. They had been spoken with a certain meaning—

he could see that by the look which accompanied them. Then what was their meaning?

It flashed upon him at once. This gentleman had recognized him, and that was the explanation. Being a magistrate, he was likely to be acquainted with the Minister's personal appearance, and he had known him immediately. Why, there was one London magistrate, Charleston, whom the Earl regarded as a personal friend, and this, no doubt, was just such a man as Charleston, keen, cultured, and, above all, prudent. As soon as he had recognized the prisoner he had grasped the whole absurd situation, and had perceived the need of caution. The Minister's name and station must not be revealed to the eager watchers about him, and he was acting, therefore, with a forethought and consideration entirely creditable to him.

The Earl could have embraced him. Never before, surely, had there been such an instance of the right man turning up at the right moment. He stepped back a pace or two, so that their talk should not be overheard, and signed to this new friend to follow; then, leaning forward, he laid an eager finger upon his sleeve.

"I believe," he whispered, "that you know who I am?"

The elderly gentleman's face showed complete understanding; he simply nodded.

"Thank Heaven for that!" said Lord Cumberwell earnestly, "I am intensely relieved. You perceive that I have become implicated in a most ridiculous affair—most ridiculous. My only wish now is to escape from it without being recognized. You will respect my desire for secrecy?"

"Certainly, certainly," answered the elderly gentleman. "Most certainly!"

"Then I leave it to you," said Lord Cumberwell. "I am in your hands."

That was enough. With a reassuring look the elderly gentleman turned back to the inspector, and conversed with him in whispers for several moments. The Earl waited in grateful expectation. Then the inspector left the room, and the stranger returned.

"There will be one or two formalities to arrange," he whispered. "But you need not wait here. Come away into another room."

The inspector reappeared almost at once, and they followed

him out. Lord Cumberwell, if he could have done so, would have shaken the dust of the office from his feet with joy and thanksgiving.

They passed down a stone corridor until they came to an open door. There the inspector drew back, as though to give precedence to the others. Lord Cumberwell, all naturally, passed on.

Then the door was closed quickly behind him, and he found himself alone. With a shock of enlightenment he heard the door locked and barred. He stared at the place in which he stood, and one look was enough.

The meaning of what had just occurred was suddenly terribly clear. He sprang to the door, and vainly tried to open it.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "Let me out—I am the Earl of Cumberwell—I am not mad—I am a Minister of State! You shall pay for this. Good heavens!"

A crowning indignity had been laid upon him. His request for the presence of the Marquis of Leyshon had suggested to the inspector that he was a lunatic at large; and the room in which he stood was a police cell.

If Lord Cumberwell's misfortunes had gone further than the police cell this narrative would have been too painful for continuation. It is a distinct relief to be able to say that at that point the tide of circumstances ceased to flow against him. It seemed that Fortune was satisfied with her revenge and confident that he would never again indulge in the ungrateful fancy which had made it necessary to give him such a lesson.

When the presiding magistrate arrived at the X. District Police Court on the following morning, he found that his appearance was extremely welcome. The inspector had a curious story to submit to his notice.

This was the story of Lord Cumberwell's arrest. He related it just as it had occurred from an official point of view, and described all that had taken place subsequently. His first impression had been, of course, that the prisoner was a criminal pure and simple, who had taken advantage of an open door for purposes of felony. His eccentric conduct and his attempts at mystery had assisted in confirming this impression. But when he had demanded the presence of the Minister for War another explanation had suggested itself, and one which threw a clearer light upon his peculiar attitude.

The man was a creature of impaired intellect who had somehow escaped from the control of his friends.

"You see, sir," said the inspector, "that would explain everything. No sane thief would risk his liberty for the sake of what he might pick up in a house of that stamp. Besides, when there's any great national excitement on, there's always some poor people who take it into their heads that they are the men of the moment, though in other things they seem to be in their sober senses. So I thought I couldn't do better than call in Dr. Boyle, from the next street, and get his opinion.

"When he came he got into talk with the prisoner, and found that it was exactly as I had guessed. The man not only declared that the Marquis and the Prime Minister were his personal friends, but had the fixed idea that he was himself some one of great importance—a Minister of State or something of the kind. There was nothing for it but to detain him while we made inquiries, so we managed to get him into a comfortable cell."

The magistrate nodded. "And then?" he asked.

"And then we inquired, sir," continued the officer. "But this is the curious part of it. No one of his description has been inquired about at any of our stations, and nothing whatever was known about him. In fact, we couldn't get a word of any sort, so we were obliged to keep him all night."

"Indeed! How did he take it?"

"Rather hard at first, as such cases generally do. Afterwards he calmed down, and this morning he seemed as right as possible, though he still refused to give any particulars of himself. The first thing he did was to ask who the magistrate was at this court. We told him that, and he seemed to be greatly pleased; in fact, sir, he seemed to know your name, and asked to be allowed to see you as soon as you came down. The next thing he asked for was a copy of the Hour."

"Ah!" said the magistrate, smiling. "Perhaps he wanted the latest news of his own movements in public! But you don't wish me to see him, do you?"

"Well, sir, if you'll excuse me, I think it would be best. He seems to know your name, and perhaps would be more willing to give you an account of himself. In such cases there's nothing like humoring them as much as possible. There's not the least danger, sir, and I'll be close at hand myself all the time."

With this assurance the magistrate was forced to be satisfied. "Oh, well," he said, "in that case, of course——. You'd better bring him here, to my room."

The inspector departed, much relieved, and the magistrate nerved himself for the interview. Even the bravest man might have felt tremors on being asked to face a lunatic, and he saw all the discomfort of the position clearly. When he heard footsteps returning he watched the door apprehensively.

The inspector opened it, ushered in the prisoner without a word, looked encouragingly at the magistrate, and vanished. Then—

"Charleston!" said the prisoner hoarsely.

The magistrate was transfixed with amazement. At the first glance he had suspected a jest, or some curious misunderstanding for he seemed to be looking upon the face and form of the Earl of Cumberwell, the Foreign Secretary, a statesman who had long been quite a familiar acquaintance of his own. At the second glance he felt inclined to dismiss the idea with scorn. Though marvellously like Lord Cumberwell, this person, on a closer scrutiny, displayed certain differences. He was shabby and faded, whereas the Earl was famous for his always irreproachable appearance. He was also older than the Minister; his aspect was altogether more subdued; he was a little more gray, much more haggard. But that voice—that voice—and that look!

"Charleston!" repeated Lord Cumberwell, advancing.

Mr. Charleston awoke from his doubts. He stepped forward in great agitation, and caught the hand extended to him.

"My dear lord!" he stammered.

When he heard the words Lord Cumberwell's strength seemed to fail him; he sank into a chair at the table, and gazed at his friend in a way which was extremely pitiful.

"I was afraid," he gasped—"I was afraid that you would not—that you would not recognize me!"

Mr. Charleston had forgotten his doubts by this time. "Not recognize you!" he repeated in pure bewilderment. "My dear lord—not recognize you!"

The Earl sat still, trying to recover himself. He was dazed and could scarcely realize what had happened—that he was at last saved. After his late experience he had not been able to feel sure of anything, and it would have fitted in completely with the other portions of his nightmare if the magis-

trate had failed to claim acquaintance with him. The foundations of his world had been shaken, and nothing could have caused him astonishment.

"Ah!" he said slowly, in mingled pain and relief. "Ah, my dear Charleston, you do not know—you cannot know—what I have gone through!"

* * * * *

So in fifteen minutes more it was all over. Everything had been left in Mr. Charleston's discreet care, and Lord Cumberwell was speeding back to his home in a well-horsed cab.

He was slowly recovering now, though it would be long before the pains left by his astounding adventure would be soothed. To escape from the vicinity of the station and its officials was a great relief in itself, and he was able to collect his thoughts. He tried to glance at the probable consequences of what had occurred. These could not be very serious. His absence would scarcely have caused alarm, for he was often away for the greater part of the night. Only Prettiman had seen him go; and though the circumstances of such a disappearance were certainly unusual, they need not have startled him to any great extent. For Prettiman was in every sense a useful servant, slow, cautious, and discreet and he would not create a sensation until he thought it absolutely necessary. It was not likely that he would have thought it necessary just yet. As for Mr. Lombard, he did not reside in the house, and his only surprise would be at the disappearance of his hat.

As for the still missing document, the Earl did not feel so anxious about it now. It had not fallen into the hands of the enemy, for he had scanned the columns of the Hour without finding the startling headline he had dreaded to see. Perhaps it was completely lost, after all; perhaps the police had recovered it; or perhaps it was now lying upon his table, returned through the post by some loyal and intelligent supporter. His first panic had been natural enough; but it had now passed, and he could wait a while.

The cab sped on through Baynton Gardens and into the respectable quiet of the Square. A moment later it drew up at the door. There was no sign of alarm, no trace of anything unusual. He alighted, still attired in the hideous hat and the shabby coat, and Prettiman appeared at the door. After the first glance the man's face was as placid and inscrutable as ever.

Lord Cumberwell replaced the hat of misfortune upon the

table from which he had taken it, and gave Prettiman directions to pay and dismiss the cabman. He saw Mr. Lombard crossing from the stairs to the study, and greeted him with a hurried "Good-morning!" Then he passed up the stairs.

Half-an-hour later he descended again, a new creature, fully refreshed and transformed by a bath and a change of garments. As he strode down the stairs not even the most stupid policemen or suburban householders could have mistaken him for anything but a Minister of State. He paused in the hall to question Prettiman.

"About that woman," he said, "who called last night with a letter, just before I went out: what did she want?"

"She was collecting for a mission, my lord. The letter was a circular letter of reference from the vicar of the parish."

So that was the secret! Without another word the Earl went on to the study. His chase had been a wild-goose chase indeed!

Prettiman looked after him soberly, and when his master had vanished his generally placid face wore a look of curious uneasiness. Though he kept his counsel faithfully, that look reappeared many times during the days that followed. In fact, Prettiman had been intensely anxious throughout the night. It was not that his master had been absent, for that was no common event; but the circumstances had been so unusual. He had come to the conclusion at last that the Earl had been suffering from a fit of temporary aberration, and had gone out under its influence. Two facts appeared to confirm this view. The first of these was the circumstance that he had gone out in his study coat and in Mr. Lombard's hat, a proceeding utterly foreign to his habits; the second was that he had rushed away to overtake a person touting for subscriptions. Either fact would have been suspicious enough but the two in conjunction were sufficient evidence to Prettiman of a want of mental balance. His lordship's return, apparently sane and sound, was an immense relief; but from that time he was always inclined to be watchful and apprehensive. He would have quitted the house immediately if Lord Cumberwell had ever again rushed out of doors in his study coat.

Unconscious of all this, the Earl joined Mr. Lombard. "I must apologize to you," he said in his most genial way. "I took your hat last evening by mistake. It was a"—he only just kept back the word "hideous" there—"it was a soft gray one."

"Oh, it did not matter," said the secretary, smiling. "I had another here."

Nothing more was said about that mysterious action. Lord Cumberwell sat down to examine a number of letters which awaited him, running through them in a quick, eager manner. The lost slip was not among them. Then he leaned back in his chair, and his hand strayed, in a half-unconscious way, to find his handkerchief.

The coat he now wore was the one he had taken to the Cabinet meeting yesterday, and the article he required was in his tail-pocket. As he took it out loosely, something released from its folds and dropped at his feet. For a while he could only gaze at it dumbly. Then he picked up a piece of paper loosely doubled. There was no doubt about it, no need for a careful examination. This was the lost document whose disappearance had brought about his shocking adventures. The secret of its loss was now fully explained.

In the cab on that eventful journey he had taken out the slip to read it, and had laid it down upon the seat beside him. A moment later he must have laid his handkerchief down also, covering the one article with the other. On reaching Downing Street he had picked up the handkerchief hastily, and the paper with it. Both had gone into the same pocket, and the slip had thus escaped his subsequent search. That was all. His whole adventure, every indignity he had suffered, had sprung from his careless action in laying that slip of paper upon the seat of the cab.

Then, with sudden enlightenment, he remembered how he had come to commit so thoughtless an action. It had been done in a moment of mental triumph and exaltation. While scanning the slip and considering its contents, the idea occurred to him that he might almost defy the Fates. His plans seemed so perfect, his position seemed so secure, that no set-back, no disaster, was within the bounds of possibility.

Lord Cumberwell read the lesson in all its bearings. He rose slowly from his chair, and moved towards the fireplace tearing into small fragments that sheet of unlucky notes. He dropped them, one by one, upon the coals, and the flames sprang up to receive them. As they vanished into ashes, so vanished also the last remnant of the Earl's sublime self-confidence. Never again would he dare to laugh at Fortune.



**ROSA: The Story of a Queen of
Hearts, by James Lincoln. Illus-
trations by Florence England
Nosworthy***



GORDON HARPER had no difficulty in finding the lost Cuban of whom he had been sent in search. On the corner of Mount Auburn and Dunster streets stood a sobbing señorita, surrounded by a miscellany of sympathizers. A bleary-eyed Irishwoman was patting her shoulder, a dumpy

* Written for Short Stories.

German boy was snuggling an apple into the crook of her elbow, a grimy teamster loomed above her with an expression of profound concern, and a Harvard professor hovered at a respectful distance, hat in hand, as if he were attending a funeral.

As Gordon walked briskly toward the scene of his adventure, he vaguely perceived that the girl was extraordinarily pretty, but this one fact more in a universe of facts brought no shadow of confusion to his clear gray eyes. Since accepting his appointment as Guide, in the Cambridge Summer School, Gordon had devoted all his leisure hours to phrase-books, and it was in very tolerable Castilian that he asked the Cuban what had gone amiss. But as for understanding her reply, that was quite another matter. Those glistening dark orbs flashed out through a mist of tears, the most bewitching smiles that Gordon had ever encountered, the slender brown hands twinkled in a series of gestures too eloquent for illustrating any calamity within compass of the phrase-books, and the roseleaf mouth, moulded in a perfect Cupid's bow, poured forth an ejaculatory cascade that abased Gordon's pride of Spanish to the dust.

"It's longin' for home she is, the darlint," cried the Irish woman, stroking the girl's powdered cheek with a rough, red hand which the graceful Cuban instantly drew down to her lips and kissed.

"She's hungry," asserted the stodgy urchin with the flaxen locks of the Fatherland. He took a capacious bite out of his apple and held it up to the señorita's mouth. Her little white teeth bit promptly into the very traces his had left. The Harvard professor who had shuddered when she kissed the washermoman's hand, now put on his hat and walked mournfully away. But the big teamster turned awkwardly to the Guide.

"Maybe it's her shoes that hurt the lady, sir. I've heard say how their feet get precious sore with the walking. I'd be jolly glad to give her a lift to wherever she wants to go," and he jerked his thumb toward the high seat of his lumbering vehicle.

To his proud delight, the señorita held out her arms to him like a child, all eagerness to be lifted to that democratic eminence.

"Oh, I say, hold on, now!" interposed Gordon, even his

calm brain beginning to reel. "I'm much obliged to all of you, but green apples will make her sick, and she can't go driving—I'm sure of that—without a chaperon."

The Cuban began to weep again, while the indignant teamster clambered profanely to his perch. As this maiden all forlorn nestled her head against Biddy's heaving breast, keeping one delicate hand on Wilhelm's flaxen poll, Gordon cursed himself for a monument of ice. But mindful of his official responsibility, he bent and made sure of the number on her metallic button.

"Do you live near?" he asked of Biddy, recognizing her as the woman who had done his freshman washing until her drunken habits wore his patience out.

From Biddy's volubility he ascertained that she, her husband and seven children were "boarding with a friend" close by. Gordon walked with the women and the faithful Wilhelm to a dingy cottage, a glimpse of whose uncleanly interior made him turn toward 856 in apologetic dismay. But this exquisite little beauty of aristocratic feature tripped in so joyously and crossed herself so devoutly before a gaudy print of the Virgin that Gordon, leaving her in Biddy's affectionate charge, raced over to Holden Chapel and ascertained her address. When he returned, Rosa Miranda, the name entered on the printed list against 856, was cuddled up contentedly on a heap of dirty cushions, admiring with unfeigned enthusiasm the tawdry splendors of Biddy's Sunday bonnet. The Cuban fervently enclasped and kissed her hostess at parting, and Gordon, whose ear was beginning to disentangle the rapid syllables, improved upon her valedictory in a fashion that might well have brought his Presbyterian forefathers trooping from their graves.

"Ask her to come and see me every day. She is so beautiful and refined, and I am so very fond of her," quavered Rosa, beginning to cry again.

"She thanks you for your kindness," translated the Guide, intercepting Wilhelm's apple-core.

"Och! It's meself that will do her swate washing for nothing at all, at all," blubbered the sympathetic Biddy.

"Tell her I shall love her till the day of my death," sobbed Rosa, resisting Gordon's awkward efforts to part their clinging embrace.

"She says good afternoon," was Gordon's Saxon version,

At last the separation was effected, and Gordon, sternly dismissing the broken-hearted Wilhelm, led off at an athletic pace toward Plato Street. Rosa tripped beside him for a moment, but presently began to hobble in the rear, and finally sat down on the curbstone and took off her shoes to rest her feet. Gordon deemed this state of affairs improper, but the shoes were so absurdly small that they diverted his attention long enough for Rosa to cast up at him one of her



enchanting glances and say that she would always remember him as her American father. This was such a shock to the comely undergraduate that he had no Spanish left in which to bid her put on her shoes again.

When this Queen of Hearts was quite ready, she resumed her fairy footgear and suddenly fled in advance of the guide to No. 13 Plato Street, in whose yard a white-haired sorceress was gathering patent herbs. This apparition Rosa presented as her mother, and while Gordon was in the act of bowing low with that frank deference which became his youth so well, the strange little figure glided forward with the sweetest dignity and slipped a miniature hand, exquisitely fashioned, into his tanned fist, saying with soft graciousness: "I am happy to

know you, Meesta Dear. It is good to see how strong the young oaks grow, though the palm of my own patio is withered," added the señora simply, still keeping her hand in the Guide's and looking up to him with dreamy eyes.

Even plain-witted Gordon knew it was not his face that wistful look was seeing, as he bowed low over the widowed hand and wished, for the first time in his life, that the gods had made him a poet.

WEAVING OF THE SPELL.

More and more he wished it as the days went on, for the Latin vivacity that rippled through Cambridge that summer awakened Gordon Harper to such a buoyant and romantic mood as he had never known before.

There was plenty of hard, hot work for the Guides, and bedtime often found them more exhausted than after a tug in the football field, but not a man of them could have been bribed to unpin his green badge and take a train for the mountains. The Summer School was in full swing. The Cubans were learning English, and all Cambridge was learning the Cuban variety of Spanish. Every other shop window flaunted a placard with the seductive information that Spanish was spoken within. The Italian who sold plaster images by the hundreds at the entrance to Memorial Hall, barefoot little Pat who peddled Havana newspapers through Quincy Street and Massachusetts Avenue, enterprising Yankee boys who set up stalls for the sale of lemonade and palm-leaf fans, even John Chinaman, at the door of his laundry, all cried their prices in the sonorous speech Columbus knew. As for the classic Harvard nonchalance, it had broken down into bubbling glee and affection. It was all like a transformation of the Arabian Nights.

The lawn-party that afternoon took place at one of the stateliest homes of Cambridge, but the chaperones had no longer any concern for the social bearing of their charges under such conditions. The strangers were neither forward nor abashed, and knew no more of awkwardness than a frog might know of feathers. Young girls from inland villages of Cuba, girls who seemed entirely at ease and happy in the poor tenements to which the adoring street children would sometimes lead them, bore themselves with the sweetest grace and cordiality toward the finest ladies of the land and flirted as naturally with a governor as with a motorman.

As the trooping guests arrived and were presented to the nervous hostess, who had taken a course of two and a half Spanish lessons in preparation for this unwonted function, they responded to her stammered Castilian greeting with the sunniest smiles and such a lively chorus of compliments as left the breathless interpreter, Spanish count though he was said to be, a thousand leagues behind.

"Oh, what *is* she saying?" implored the great lady; pinching, in her excitement, the interpreter's noble wrist.

"She offers you her house in Cuba," explained the count, and the flattered hostess, new to the conventional phrase and happily unaware that her island mansion consisted of but three rooms, one of which extended hospitality to pigs and poultry, actually kissed—tell it not on Copley Square—the winsome lips of the Madonna-eyed school teacher in a cotton shirt waist.

Rosa and her mother were among the last arrivals. The chaperon of No. 13 Plato Street, had fondly hoped to conduct her thirty charges in a single galaxy of beauty, but after three hours of helping, hurrying and despairing, only fifteen were arrayed. They seemed to bring the scent of tropic roses with them, as they flocked like children about her, holding up their dainty faces to be kissed and praised. The Beacon Hill woman groaned inwardly over the cheap American hats with which all the fifteen had crowned their midnight tresses, but she knew that those garish structures represented to them the height of Boston elegance. Unable to restrain their impatience and her own, she marshaled them forth at once, requesting Rosa's mother, dignified and lovely in her black lace mantilla, to chaperon the second detachment. But meanwhile Ester and Anita had danced on in advance, and their witcheries so wrought upon the popcorn man at the corner that he filled their little gloved hands with his whitest kernels. These they ate greedily and thus disarranged the powder about their precious mouths, whereupon nothing would do but they must go back for a fresh application. In vain the chaperon dusted those charming faces with her best lace handkerchief, and swore by bell and book that the powder was distributed with absolute impartiality. They had no confidence in her judgment in matters of importance, and she was obliged to leave them for the later party.

When an hour had passed with no sign of her tardy graces the chaperon grew anxious and sought out Gordon Harper, whose bright head, overtopping the throng, made an easy beacon. As she slowly neared him she looked the Guide over from head to foot and her dark eyes misted with admiration. How like a young Apollo he stood upon the greensward, the wind lifting his thick brown locks for the sun to turn to gold! Where was the Brunhild for this Siegfried?

But the hero—God save the mark!—had been dreaming Helens and Cleopatras. Gordon had known nice girls all his life, played with them, studied with them, walked and driven and danced with them, but these exquisite exotics from the Antilles wrapped his senses in a glow and perfume that had



nothing in common with his New England flirtations. Not his platonic friend Miss Wrenn, nor any other of the clever Radcliffe girls who were teaching the English classes or serving as interpreters and guides had won a word from him the afternoon long. He could not have told whether Miss Wrenn was there or not, much less the others. They had all

dropped out of his consciousness like mathematics after the last examination.

Ever since greeting his hostess, Gordon had been roaming from group to group of those bewitching Cubans, finding one as wondrous as another and all alike Titanias of some mystic fairyland. He seemed to be breathing a new, delicious air, or something finer and more exhilarating than air. His spirit overran with mirth, and he revelled in Spanish-English badinage with the ready señoritas, who made him blush by their compliments and taught him to "throw flowers" in return.

The chaperone had to speak twice to Gordon before he heard her voice. Even then he listened absently, and though he dutifully went to do her bidding, he missed his way in those Cambridge paths that he knew like a primer, and had passed No. 13 Plato Street by more than a block before he remembered that he had an errand there.

As he strode up the walk beneath the open windows, a stormy drum on the piano teased his spell-bound senses, and he turned his head, for there was no one to warn him, and looked in. Rosa was dancing, that was all. A soft-eyed quadronee leaned over from beyond the pianist, a flush in her dusky cheeks, eagerly watching every poise in the slow and rhythmic swaying of that stately little figure. Gordon, standing like a statue midway up the walk, could not see Rosa at all, only her reflection. A shadow in a glass had changed his life.

After some ten or fifteen minutes, when Dorotea, whose fainting fit from the exertion of the toilet had delayed them, was revived; when Blanca, who had taken Pepita's handkerchief instead of her own to bathe Juana's head, had been upbraided and forgiven; when Inis had wept over her sandalwood fan which the landlady, in a moment of agitation, had dropped into the teapot; and when the whole fluttering, twittering bevy had come down stairs at last, Rosa, a naughty child of seventeen; Rosa, a witch with tropic starlights melted in her eyes, elemental womanhood, the lyric of the world, was dancing still, and Gordon, outside the window, was staring at a shadow in a glass.

CLIMAX.

An east wind blew up one morning, about a fortnight later, and put all Cambridge out of sorts. The management was

mortified. Possessed, as it had come to be, by a very mania of hospitality, it would have given the Cuban guests only those burning azure skies which seemed their natural right. This dull, sullen air was not becoming to the lovely señoritas. They huddled into such American shawls and cloaks as they could borrow, beg or steal, and even kept on their curl-papers for warmth.



People woke with headaches and with a tendency to think. They had been laughing, singing, dancing so much of late that the map of care had faded on many a conscientious brow, but this was northern weather, Teuton weather, and the dwellers by the Charles, shaking off their tropical enchantment, returned for a little to the dismal ways of common sense.

Even to Gordon the prosaic morning brought a heavy mood. He sighed as he fastened his collar, and sighed again, with a different inflection, when the collar button slipped out of his fingers and rolled merrily under the bureau, making a sunshine in a dusty place. His manly brows were knitted and his lips were firmly set as he stooped and groped for it. The Twins,

whose vocabulary is limited, would have said that Gordon was cross.

There was a photograph of the Twins on the bureau. Gordon glanced toward it from time to time, almost guiltily, as he brushed his hair. (It was only hair this morning. There was no sunshine to turn it into gold, and no wistful gaze of Radcliffe damozel to transform it to the halo of a young St. George.) What was there in that photograph to make Gordon wince? Perhaps the look of his mother in Jack's determined face, or, perhaps, the chubby clutch with which Marion held to her breast a ridiculous little tin bank, in which were hoarded all those glittering coins that Gordon made a point of collecting and contributing to her "Education Fund."

It would cost some thousands of such coins to give Marion the college course that her brother already planned for her, for there is not much money in the Presbyterian ministry, and it had come to be quietly understood at home that Gordon would relieve his father to the extent of educating at least one of the twins. And Marion, Gordon's pet, was to be a woman of culture. Culture? Good heavens! As a matter of fact, this child, at the age of nine, this baby sister still playing with her dolls, had already a better schooling than Rosa, whom he had adored for two ecstatic weeks, whom he—meant to marry?

The word struck him like a shower bath. Gordon gasped. Then he strode over to the northern window, stared into the lowering sky, and thought and thought and thought.

When, an hour later, he turned and took his hat, he looked like a man exhausted from a hard day's work.

As the gate swung behind him, he became aware of tumult, outcries, alarm. All the faces up and down the street were turned in one direction. Gordon impulsively ran on, where the faces were looking, swung around a corner, dashed across the square, caught sight of a bicycle wildly wobbling far ahead, a bicycle too evidently in the grip of a daring, ignorant rider, and ran more swiftly than before, until a faintness took him—for he had recognized the figure on the wheel—yet still, although his dizzy head rocked queerly from one shoulder to the other, those good long legs of his mechanically ran and ran. But before he reached her, she was down, there in the midmost of the street, frightfully in front of a galloping horse

with a heavy carriage attached—Rosa, his Rose of Life, that those hoofs would crush forever!

If only that girl had been half as well-disciplined and reasonable as that dumb brute above her!

She lay flat across the wheel, face upward, and the horse, unable to check his pace or turn in time, had it clearly in mind not to trample her. His kind eyes looked down into hers and would have told her so, as he planted his iron feet so carefully on either side the slender body, rending and smashing the bicycle, wood and metal, but not so much as bruising a finger of that delicate shape in flesh and blood; but Rosa screamed frantically and, lying safely as she was, midway between the ruts, flung herself to one side so that a wheel must perforce jolt over her right ankle. The pain sharpened the fierceness of her terrified outcry, an outcry so uncontrolled as to seem almost barbaric. It was repulsive even to Gordon, even in the moment when he gathered her, restored from the peril of death, up into his arms and bore her, a dusty, disordered, struggling burden, toward the city hospital, that chanced to be close by. A capped and aproned nurse came running out to meet them and led him to a chilly, whitewashed basement, where a few emergency cases, a much-bandaged urchin, with a fish hook in his calf, two blotchy little girls who had been playing in poison ivy, a negress with a bruised face, and a workingman with a bloodied blouse, were patiently waiting their turns. But they all fell back in consternation before Rosa's ear-splitting shrieks and yielded her right of way.

She gave the doctors and nurses so much trouble that they finally had to etherize her in order to do what must be done for the injured ankle which, after all, had escaped wonderfully well.

Despite Gordon's protests and assurances, she fought against the action of the ether as against the creeping, suffocating numbness of death itself and, for an hour after, had to be held down on that white draped, ghastly surgical table by force of three strong men. And Gordon, standing faithfully beside her in virtue of his frayed green badge, an official guide and interpreter, thought his love for her was dead. Few people appear to advantage under opiates, and this was Gordon's first experience. The glamour of the eyes was shattered.

But as the excitable southern brain reeled out from under

the beclouding of the ether, Rosa began to call his name, to seek his touch. Wild and frightened still, she flung herself upon his breast.

"She's light-headed yet," said one of the surgeons good-humoredly, to save the Guide's blushes.

But Gordon, with a sudden new sense of protection and power, closed his arms about her and felt her nestle close against his heart.

ENTRANCE OF THE VILLAIN.

Gordon, a few days later, gloomily aware that a fellow's engagement must sooner or later be broken to a fellow's family, sat himself down at his desk with a thump and scrawled off a note to his father. He wrote more heavily than usual, the uncommon inkiness of his penmanship giving, of course, weight to his arguments. The letter went out by the evening mail. It reached Pinecrest in time to spoil an excellent breakfast for two excellent people.

The mother's speech, incredulous, indignant, sarcastic, gushed on and on. She talked long after she had said a number of times over all that she had to say, for she was a gallant little woman and believed in holding the fort to the last powder-flash. She knew that when she stopped her husband would begin, and from the way in which his blue-veined, ministerial hand gripped his gray whisker, she dreaded the upright words that he would speak. All minor decisions of the household he had always left to her, but when he scented a moral issue——!

Yet it is evident that a distressed mother, who has felt a lump of lead dragging at her heart ever since the postman made his morning round, cannot talk forever.

When at last his wife's hurried, incoherent sentences, which had affected him no more than the clamor of the English sparrows in the vines outside the window, fluttered into silence Mr. Harper spoke:

"It is a sore trial, but our path is plain. Truth and honor outweigh all temporal concerns. The promise that Gordon has given——"

"Oh, John! He hasn't given any promise."

"Or implied——"

"John! John! John!"

"He must keep, let the cost be what it may. As a Christian gentleman he has no other course."

And having thus uttered forth his voice, with as much appearance of emotion, or likelihood of bending, as his own Presbyterian steeple would have shown, the Rev. John Harper excused himself to the lady of the coffee-urn, walked to his study with a feeblor step than ever before, bolted the door behind him, and cried like a little child.

And Gordon had meant to be such a comfort to his parents!

Mrs. Harper, meanwhile, fiercely choking back her sobs, was deliberately making, one shudders to record, a contract with the devil.

"I have been a faithful wife to John five and twenty years," she moaned, so brokenly that the very walls might have pitied her, "and when he said a thing was good or bad I have never gone against him once—not once. But I don't care whether this is right or wrong, and I don't care what John thinks or what I ought to think. I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to save my

boy. And after that it doesn't matter what becomes of me."

And thereupon the Prince of Evil did so strengthen her that she lifted her head, scrubbed her red eyes dry, and began, a wily general, to lay out her campaign. And John Harper, with his blue-veined hand gripping his gray whisker, never dreamed that for the first time in a quarter of a century a gulf had opened between his wife and him.

In due season Gordon received an exemplary note from his father which hurt the boy like toothache. First he



crumpled it furiously in his fist; then he smoothed it out and laid it away in his Bible. As for his mother's missive, it simply befogged such wits as the summer's experience had left him. It ran:

"My precious son:

I know that you would want, hard as it may be, to bring her to us at once, and Mrs. Miranda, too. We shall expect the three of you to-morrow for luncheon. I will have native foods as much as possible and the Twins understand that they are not to notice it if they eat with their fingers. Mrs. Moren will lend me one of her maids for waiting, so that I may keep our colored Peggy out of their sight. You can always depend, dear boy, in all distresses; on

Your affectionate mother."

Gordon ran both hands through his brown mop and groaned. "Really, mamma's style—!"

He tried to think it was his literary sense that was wounded.

As Mrs. Harper stood waiting at the foot of the stairway to greet her descending guests, a little woman with a careworn face and rusty hair drawn severely back to a structure modeled on a doorknob, she looked, in her best black silk, with a red carnation and a geranium leaf pinned exactly up and down on her left breast, like the respectable person that she was. She had accepted the presidency of the Pinecrest Woman's Club, she had organized a Magazine Circle, she was leader of the Bible Class, she was the Chairman of the Missionary Committee, what she knew about the general activities of the world was to the knowledge of Doña Benita Miranda as the farmer's granary to the squirrel's hoard, what she contributed to the betterment of humanity was to the conscious philanthropy of this other as a furnace to a firefly. But how wondrously the little Cuban lady swept down those parsonage stairs, how daintily her soft draperies, of flimsiest stuff though they were, enveloped her, with what a winsome dignity she extended her delicate hand to that stiff, forbidding hostess! Tiny creatures both, they had recognized each other as foes.

Gordon was not without nervousness over Rosa's first appearance before the authors of his being—for Gordon could see the powder now—but Rosita looked so exquisite in that cheap finery of hers that the white powder disfigured her no more than the threads of morning gossamer disfigure a wild-rose bush. Her strange, dark beauty sealed her fate with Gordon's plain little mother. "A Witch of Endor! A Cleopatra! A—a—a—Jezebel!" The heavens should fall before

Mrs. John Harper would own to a daughter-in-law with eyes like that. Very meltingly they looked for the maternal kiss which was by no means given, but Mr. Harper, noting the wave of surprise and half resentment that swept across the eager, glowing face, and resolved, now smarting at the stake, not to flinch for a fagot more, stooped and saluted his son's choice, as she seemed to expect, with a touch of his gray moustache to either powdery cheek.

As for the Twins—and the approval of the Twins really counts for much in the Harper family—they were enamored of Rosita from the outset. Young pagans that they were, they loved her for being so pretty and for hugging them so hard. Marion's exuberant caresses went far toward making good any shortcomings in other members of the family, but it was Jack of the lemon-colored locks in whom Gordon had really found a rival. The youngster stood staring mutely on this Queen of Faery, such awe and adoration in his round blue eyes that Rosa did not disdain to put forth all her coquetry and feed his milk-white flame with such flatteries and favors as Gordon himself had never yet enjoyed. She kissed Jack for his eyes and she kissed him for his hair and she kissed him for his name, because it was the name of good San Juan. With Gordon standing to interpret, she drew Jack close to her side—the boy sniffed rapturously, for he had not been bred in an atmosphere of sandal wood and musk—and told him how on San Juan's day in Cuba the sun rises dancing, and at noon, if you bend the branches of a tree over a fountain, so as to make a shade, and then break an egg and drop it into the water, you will see the head of Jesus there.

"Jack!" called Mrs. Harper, her very marrow curdling, "run this minute and see if luncheon is ready. Marion, go with him!"

But these absorbed little brands could in no wise be plucked from the burning.

"And at midnight the dear San Juan goes to and fro and blesses all the earth, all the mountains, fields and rivers, even the least of the blades of grass, and then my mother goes out and gathers healing herbs, that cure chills and fevers and love-longings—"

"John, *will* you take Mrs. Miranda out to the dining-room?"

CATASTROPHE.

The luncheon, to the consuming rage of the hostess, who had thought to bring confusion of face and enlightening of eyes to Gordon by putting his wild islanders to the sharp test of civilized society, went off extremely well. Gordon, as the medium of communication, by putting a Spanish polish on all the Harpers' remarks and trimming the Cuban compliments down to American size, did much toward the promotion of harmony. When Marion, for instance, pleasingly observed: "I thought you'd just be niggers," Gordon translated: "My sister says you are even more beautiful than she expected." The table manners of the guests, though Gordon, who had observed Rosa and her mother in Memorial Hall and under still more informal circumstances, was not without his secret apprehensions, stood the strain. Taken utterly by surprise, they had devoutly bowed their heads before the grace was over, they helped themselves with knife and fork even to rolls and cakes, and before the mystery of finger bowls they waited quietly for an initiative from their hostess, though it must be admitted that they wiped their hands on the embroidered doilies. Doña Benita, it is true, endured one awful moment. The mustard had been handed her by Mrs. Moren's maid and, mistaking the yellow paste in the fanciful cup for an American sweetmeat, she responsively took a heaping spoonful and instantly thrust it, mustard spoon and all, deep into her mouth. It made the great tears spring, but she swallowed it smilingly, and no one seemed to notice save Gordon, who promptly put a glass of water at her hand.

Rosa, seated next to Mr. Harper, marveled at his inhospitable rudeness in not asking her to drink coffee—since there was no wine—from his own cup. Gordon, who, in preparation for this luncheon, had been reading up in Gore Hall on Spanish Table customs, explained her puzzle to his father.

"She says, sir," concluded Gordon, "that you must be afraid she will surprise your secrets, for if two drink from the same cup, they drink each other's thoughts."

"Tell Miss Rosa," replied the minister, beaming so kindly on them both that his wife could have hurled the coffee-urn at his reverend gray head, "that I am thinking only this: one must be old to understand the happiness of being young."

But Mrs. Harper, though foiled in her treacherous design of exposing the barbarism of these impossible relatives, had a yet more baleful weapon in reserve—the odium theologicum. After luncheon, when Gordon and Rosita, with the enraptured Twins at their heels, were strolling down the orchard, and Mr. Harper was watching them with a half-guilty smile from his hammock under the elms, Gordon's mother stealthily conducted Rosa's mother across the street to "see the meeting-house."

One would have supposed that this square, uncompromising edifice was stored with dynamite, so explosively did it act on the incredibly simple mind of the señora. Up to this time she had utterly failed to grasp the fact, which Gordon had haltingly explained, that there was a difference of creed between the lovers. She and Rosita had listened graciously to the long word Presbyterian without the remotest inkling of its meaning. But this was something concrete, something tangible—a temple without images; a church without a Virgin. Horror and sacrilege! The village priest at home had warned her against such heretic thresholds. In a flame of fervor Doña Benita shook her fist at the pulpit and spat upon the floor.

When Gordon, with the others, came rushing to the scene of outcry, his mother-in-law elect was dancing with fury and snapping her wee brown fingers in Mrs. Harper's encrimsoned countenance, while pouring forth a torrent of vehement Cubanese.

"You would have made my child a Lutheran Atheist! Bah! Bah! You would have married her with horrid rites—Maria Santisima—in a Protestant temple! And you! Fie, fie upon you for a vile, bad woman! You live with a priest. I have eaten shameful bread."

For a moment even yet the family sympathies wavered, but Mrs. Harper, turning from red to white, fainted on the pulpit stairs, and won her Waterloo.

It was the first swoon of her life; a stubborn and alarming one, and when her husband and children had at last succeeded in reviving her, the luncheon-guests were gone.

Gordon looked about him in a dazed, wistful fashion, as a child looks for the iridescent bubble that was the joy of his eyes an instant since.



**THE Ivory Flute: A
Tale of Eastern Magic, by
Aldis Dunbar. Illustrations
by Bessie Collins Pease***



FROM the cool darkness of Mirza Achmet's inner court, Thomassin passed out to meet the glare and commotion of the bazaar. For a breath of time he paused in the shadow, letting his eyes become accustomed to the brightness.

Written for Short Stories

Everywhere was vivid, swirling color. Sight was dazzled by the constant sway of the crowd—the ever-varying succession of blue, red, intense green, saffron shot with silver. Here passed a swarthy giant, clad in white threaded with gold, a leopard skin hanging across his arm. There, the unwieldy bulk of an elephant—the scarlet trapping gleaming on its dusky sides like a gaudy pennon against a storm cloud—shouldered its way into the confusion, the shrill cry of the mahout warning those on foot to stand aside. The sunheated air was heavy with the scent—aromatic and all-pervading—of wilted marigolds.

Paulet and Hira Singh had returned direct to the hotel, but Philip Thomassin, allured by that which was to them the veriest commonplace, sauntered serenely through the bazaar, toward the wider space within the open city gate.

Here was less turmoil. Beyond the wide arch, along the dusty road that led across the level country, grew dark mango trees. The morning mist had long passed away, and there was a pleasant hint of wood smoke from some smoldering camp-fire. The fascination of the land was strong within him, and Thomassin's blue eyes studied his neighbors untiringly.

As he stood there, a little aside from the stream of traffic, a new sound broke on his ears. Turning, he saw, in an open space before the low shops, two figures, until now unnoticed. One was a boy, dark and impassive of expression, his clothes tattered and faded.

Thomassin went closer to see. The liquid notes rose and fell, first loud and cheerful, then slower, more soft, slipping almost imperceptibly into the monotonous chant of the snake-charmers. The flute—unlike any that he had ever happened



to notice—was of ivory, with a row of turquoises set in a band of gold that twisted entirely around it from one end to the other. While he looked at it curiously, standing in the full blaze of the sunlight, something—a faint flash as of a mirror—drew his attention to the second figure. In a low, arched doorway stood a tall man, wrapped in a dull gray cloak. On his head was a green turban, with tarnished golden fringe hanging about it. His eyes, deep-set and compelling, sought those of the young Englishman.

The music ceased with a low wail; the player held out his hand, its thin fingers curved in appeal. Thomassin, half heeding the whisper of "Sahib, sahib!" from the lad, yet unable to draw his attention from the man in the gray cloak, dropped a small coin into the waiting palm, and walked across to the shop, stepping aside to avoid falling over a sprawling brown baby, whose mother had set it down while she bargained for a handful of greasy sweetmeats, paying down their price with feigned reluctance.

The ring on his finger—the finest seal in Mirza Achmet's collection—was too tight. It made his hand throb and burn. The shop was that of a working goldsmith. When he reached it, the man in gray was sitting inside, twisting some gold wire into a bracelet like those worn by the women of the district.

"The sahib's ring is too small?" he asked, in a low, rather dull voice. Thomassin nodded, holding out his sun-burned hand. The jeweller took up a little gauge.

"It should be stretched two sizes larger. Will the sahib be seated while I make it right for him?" Again Thomassin assented, this time almost wearily. He dropped down on the waiting pile of cushions with a sense of relief. The place was so quiet. Only a single ray of sunshine crept through a crevice in the roof, falling athwart his hand and glinting on the handsome sapphire that Paulet had pronounced flawless. And Mark Paulet knew. Had he not lived for nine years in Surajpore, learning to know the people around him, taught by Hira Singh, more comrade than retainer?

A sudden glare in his eyes brought him to his feet with a start. The hot sun shone on him as he stood there in the open space before the Lahore gate. The flute-player was gone. The naked baby still sprawled at his feet; its mother was still counting out the few coins from her scanty store. Where were the jeweller and his shop?

The blank surface of the city wall met his gaze as he looked across the beaten roadway. No man in gray lounged there, no sombre-faced lad made music in the sunlit dust, though the droning plaint of the ivory flute was still ringing in his ears. But the feeling of discomfort in his finger had disappeared—with his sapphire ring.

Thomassin could not repress a cry of amazement, and all faces turned toward him. A little nut-colored policeman—elaborately uniformed—ran up.

"Has the sahib lost something?" he inquired with deference, having seen Thomassin in the company of Mark Paulet.

"My seal ring," gasped Thomassin. "I went into the goldsmith's shop, over there—" but the wizened face expressed only polite incredulity.

"Where, sahib? This is not the jewellers' quarter. No goldsmith has his shop between the Lahore gate and the house of Mirza Achmet, the jewel merchant. Moreover, the sahib has been standing quite still—perfectly—and not moving."

Thomassin's temper rose in a sudden gust. He had been tricked in some manner, and the swindler, in league with these people, was escaping, while he was delayed by them.

"I tell you I went into a shop—over there" (pointing toward the uneven wall),—"to have my ring altered."

A chatter of voices uprose.

"No shop is. Only wall."

"Never was shop there in Surajpore!"

"The sahib took no step back or forward since giving money to the flute player."

"Hai!" exclaimed the diminutive official. "May be the flute boy is thief!" But Thomassin shook his head.

"I had the ring after I gave him the money and walked away. What do you call him? Paulet Sahib will get to the bottom of this affair." He strode toward the big pink hotel in a rage, followed by the policeman, if possible, more deferential than before at the name of "Paulet Sahib."

The gossiping groups melted away; the veiled woman lifted the cooing baby to her hip and shuffled out of sight; a caravan from the south filled up the gate, and the new interest it created drove the thought of the mad English sahib from the minds of the loungers in the bazaar.

But on the cool veranda of the "Queen's Hotel" an angry young Hercules with flashing blue eyes and close cropped fair

hair, and a very small and tawny policeman with many gilt buttons and yards of braid on his otherwise shabby blue uniform, were interrupting each other in vain endeavors to pour a clear and consecutive story into the ears of "Paulet Sahib."

"You say that the ring was still on your finger after the boy had gone?" asked the quiet voice, stilling the confusion.

"Yes," averred Thomassin. "It was so tight that I could scarcely endure the pressure. I couldn't be mistaken about that, you know."

"And the man—the one with the green turban. Did you see him leaning against the wall, Abdallah?"

It straightway appeared that Thomassin alone had paid any attention to the man. So many men came and went

by the Lahore gate, and green turbans with ragged gold fringe were not uncommon. All had been listening to the boy with the white flute, and Abdallah was willing to swear that Thomassin had never stirred a step after giving the coin to the lad.

"Like this he held his hand," explained Abdallah, in the vernacular. "The blonde sahib dropped a piece of money into it without touching it. Then the boy put his flute in his bosom and disappeared in the bazaar. He had not fairly turned the corner of Suleiman's well when the sahib gave a great

cry and all looked up. We saw no man. He may have been there, but who would have looked? I was seated in the shadow of the gate, and I know."

"Then find the boy, son of a bat," commanded Paulet. "If he is not in the jail by sunset, there shall be fines and cutting off of gilded buttons. Give word to Mirza Achmet, for he must know that a wily thief is in Surajpore."

Abdallah, bowing to the earth, hastened out, almost



colliding with a stout little man in a pith helmet, who was talking vehemently to Hira Singh.

"'Twasn't the value of the thing, I tell you. It was the association. Why, it belonged to my great grandfather, Sir Anthony Garth, Vice-Admiral of the Red. I never allowed it to leave my finger."

"What's up, Garth?" asked Paulet, as he and Thomassin looked around in surprise.

"I've lost my ring. That big yellow diamond I was showing you." Thomassin caught his breath, but Paulet laid an imperative hand on his arm.

"How did it happen?" he asked.

"Why, it was right outside here. I stopped to listen to a street musician, and when I tossed him a shilling I noticed that my hand had a smear of fresh paint on it. I went into a shop, and the man gave me a cloth to wipe it on. And—" he paused and gulped—"I don't know where the ring went, but go it did."

"And you're sure it wasn't the flute-player that took it?" Garth shook his head.

"Impossible. I didn't see the stain until I'd picked out a shilling to give him. And when I—I came out—he was gone."

"There's something behind all this! What did the merchant look like?" demanded Thomassin, no longer to be restrained.

"Dark, as all these beggars are—and he wore a green turban."

"Had he queer eyes?"

"Sort of," Garth admitted uneasily. "But he never touched my hand at all. He pointed to the cloth^f lying on a chest, and as I stooped to pick it up—"

"Well," asked Paulet, "what came next?"

"Perhaps you'll not believe me, but—" he gulped again, "there wasn't any shop there. Nothing but the wide wall of the hotel compound. What's more," working himself up into a rubicund passion, "the lazy beggars around swore that I hadn't gone into any shop. That there hadn't ever been a sign of a shop near there. And there wasn't a sign of paint on my hand, either!"

"And one thing more, did you notice the flute?" asked Paulet?

"Yes. That was what made me stop first of all. It was a queer white one, slender, with a band like a gold snake coiled around it, and blue stones set in."

Mark Paulet's eyes met those of Philip Thomassin.



"The flute player—or his master? Which?"

But none could answer.

It was a year later. Paulet, worn with work in the famine district, had been given three months leave. There was noth-

ing to take him to England, so he left the steamer at Naples and traveled slowly northward—he and his friend.

At last the two—the wiry, quiet officer and his tall, dark companion—saw the miracle of Italian spring on the banks of the Arno, and rested from wandering.

One day they were exploring a narrow street in the oldest quarter of the city, Paulet pointing out the quaint carvings on the dark, overhanging walls to Hira Singh, when a strain of music, oddly familiar, trembled in the air. The face of the hill man lighted up.

“That is home sound, Paulet Sahib. Who in this land can play the chant of the snake-charmer?”

Paulet, catching his arm, drew him forward in pursuit. A moment later they came out into a little lonely square, with a moss-covered fountain in the center. Here half a dozen children were gathered about a boy, whose tattered garments were of a fashion that filled them with wonder. He was playing mournfully, slowly. But Hira Singh drew back.

“Look, sahib! The ivory flute!”

Paulet’s cool gray eyes dilated, then contracted, and, with his companion, he stepped back into the damp shadow of the narrow lane through which they had come.

“The sahib remembers how Thomassin Sahib and Garth Sahib lost their rings in Surajpore? And how the boy who played and the man who offered help could never be traced?”

Paulet assented, his eyes roving restlessly around the little piazza.

“There of a surety is the boy we sought. So was he dressed in Surajpore.”

“But where is the man?”

“He will not be seen until he chooses,” whispered Hira Singh.

Paulet considered silently, then raised his head.

“See here, Hira Singh. Will you do exactly as I say? We’ll bag this pair of rascals.”

“I am the sahib’s man,” was the firm reply, as a look of devotion illumined the dark eyes.

“Hark, then. Don’t listen to the boy. I am going to put on this ring,” he drew a heavily chased gold band from his pocket, and slipped it on his finger. “I shall let the boy see it. You follow, at one side. In the moment that I give him

a piece of money, note where I am looking. If a man stands there, grasp and hold him fast. I shall take care of the boy."

Without another word, he strolled out into the little strip of light near the fountain. As the boy saw him, the tones of the flute swelled again.

Hira Singh, watching every motion, saw Paulet stop, gazing fixedly at the wall of the church. Behind a buttress crouched a gray-clad figure. The fold of a green turban showed dimly in the half light. Slowly Paulet's hand moved to his pocket. With a step like that of a panther, the lithe, agile hill-man stole along the wall, and as Paulet seized the cowering musician, there was a spring, a muffled outcry, then a grim struggle under the walls of the gray old church.

The terrified children fled, clinging to each other in terror, to bring help, but it was soon over. The flute-player and his companion were secured. Hira Singh, willing to take no chances, tore the green turban from the shaven head it covered, and bound its owner's arms behind him. Paulet looked at the captives with interest.

"Where is the sapphire seal ring that you stole in Surajpore?" he asked, in Urdu.

"Allah knows, or Rasalu, there," muttered the boy, sullenly.

"And the yellow diamond of Garth Sahib?" turning to the one called Rasalu. The swarthy face twisted in a mocking grin.

"If I tell the sahib, will he let Ali go free? I did it all. He but played the flute at my bidding."

"Prove that, and we shall see," answered Paulet. "Where is *my* ring?"

"In my sash," was Ali's sulky reply. Paulet, searching, returned it to his pocket.

"Nevertheless," put in Rasalu, eagerly, "I did it. Hearken, sahib. When he plays on the ivory flute, all must listen. Then I look steadily at the one who has a ring of price. He sees me, and what I will is reflected in his mind. Ali, seeing that he is mine, stops playing, receiving the ring from the one who gives it, thinking it a piece of money from his purse. Hai! Many a time! I give him to believe that he comes near me with the ring afterward, while Ali slips out of sight. It lasts but a moment. Then we are both gone and he has not moved. Few men would believe, but *you* know truth, sahib. You know India."

"Yes," Paulet spoke slowly, "I knew—a minute ago. I would have sworn that you sat reading—in a book stall—there—in the wall of the church. Had it not been for Hira Singh—"

"And the sahib will let Ali go? He is the pearl of my heart. *Such* a flute-player. Punish me, but release Ali. Play, *play*, my son!"

Obedient, the slender, dusky fingers glided along the jewelled stops of the flute, and its uncanny tones wandered out on the air. Paulet and his companion listened, half fascinated. More sweet grew the notes, more soft. The eyes of both men rested on the band of twisted gold, that seemed to move around like a snake writhing. As men tranced they watched it, while Ali let one hand fall to his sash, keeping up the music with the other. There came a sudden sweep of a curved knife, cutting through green turban cloth, a cry, a leap forward, the light crash of a small object on the worn old stones of the Florentine pavement. Down the narrow lane came the clatter of the hurrying carabinieri.

But the bare feet of Ali and Rasalu sent back no echo to tell the path by which they had escaped. The gloom of the crooked streets swallowed them, and in the lonely piazza Paulet and Hira Singh stooped over the handful of white splinters which had been an ivory flute. Many rings glittered among them—one a yellow diamond, one set with a brilliant sapphire.





**Y Friend Mussard: An
Adventurer's Story, by Ludovic
Halevy. Translated from the
French by H. Twitchell***



FOR eight years my schoolmate Mussard and myself traveled wearily round and round a large square enclosure with grated openings, like genuine circus horses. This was termed our recreation. At the end of these eight years our prison doors had been opened and a brood of bachelors took their flight. We were free at last.

Mussard was the rich boy of the college. He went to riding school on Tuesdays, and quite dazzled us with his spurs, his patent leather boots, his gay-colored cravats and his dogskin gloves. He had his duels, and his tilbury with a little negro for a groom. In fact, he was one of the glories of the Latin Quarter, and when he appeared, followed by his black man, he was greeted with "Vive Mussard! Vive Loulou!"

Loulou was the name of the negro. Ten years afterward I ran across him in the green-room of a theater, dressed in the costume of a prince of Abyssinia.

By the time he was twenty-three, Mussard had received 200,000 francs of his inheritance from his father. Mussard senior died this same year, 1857, and his fortune was divided among his four children. Mussard's share was half a million.

At the end of five years he was penniless, with a hundred francs of debt. He was compelled to set to work to do something for a living. He had one fixed idea: to get rich again so as to be able to amuse himself.

When I met him in 1862 he was on foot. No more tilbury, no more negro! He was in the best of spirits, however. He

*Translated for Short Stories.

came to see me often after that, and he always had some scheme in view; something sure, with millions in it, to be had for the mere trouble of picking it up. But in the meantime he was a trifle embarrassed—five louis would be agreeable to him. The request was always made frankly and cheerfully. He was no shamefaced pauper; on the contrary, he was a confident, brilliant one.

I gave him five louis twice, thrice, then I grew discouraged. My friend was becoming too costly. I lessened the amount of the gift to one louis. He was not in the least offended at this. He always took the money without looking at it. He was delicate in his indelicacy.

"I keep an account of it all," he would say. "I shall be able to pay back all I owe you in a few months, if my new scheme succeeds. And it is a good one, I can assure you."

He would then rattle on about his prospective millions, furnishing me amusement in return for my money. During the past quarter of a century I have often met my college classmates in one place and another. One was a lawyer and kept on being a lawyer; another was a physician and continued in the profession. Another still was a politician, and although he had changed his opinions ten times, a politician he remained. These meetings were monotonous, uninteresting, and without surprises.

With Mussard it was different. Every time he planted himself squarely before me with outstretched hands and hearty greeting, I said to myself, "This will cost me twenty francs, but in return I shall hear an amusing story."

Every time it was something new. One time it was coal. He had been made the director of a company to exploit a new kind of fuel. When next I met him, I inquired about this enterprise.

"Which one?" he asked.

"Why, the coal that wasn't coal."

"Oh, that was a failure! The stuff was never willing to burn. But I have several other things on hand—a health flour, a system of paving, etc., etc."

He then took his twenty francs and passed on.

I met him regularly every six months. It was always something new: he was going the next day to join Garibaldi in Italy; he was about to become the manager of a provincial theater, and he wanted me to take a letter for him to Sardou;

he was the representative of a wine house, the editor of a government paper; he was going to America to take part in the Civil War, on which side he had not yet decided, besides, that didn't matter in the least; he was writing a play; and so on, ad infinitum.

He was a veritable knight of labor, and so witty, original and merry withal.

On one occasion I met him in Bordeaux. He wore top-boots, a red Garibaldi shirt and a felt hat. He rushed up to me as soon as he spied me.

"So it is you!" he exclaimed. "Here in Bordeaux! What luck! Where are you stopping?"

"At the Hôtel de France."

"Have you any clothes with you?" he asked eagerly.

"What kind of clothes?"

"A change."

"Of course."

"Come right off, then. We are about the same height. I know you will lend me a suit."

I took him, or rather he took me, to my hotel. On the way he told me his story and convinced me how necessary it was for him to get out of his present garb. He had been offered a position as secretary to a deputy at a salary of three hundred francs a month. But the deputy belonged to the extreme right, and to present himself in a revolutionary costume was a thing not to be thought of; hence the urgent need of conventional clothes.

On reaching my apartment he at once proceeded to make his toilet, describing the battle of Dijon as he proceeded. He donned my suit, and brushed and combed himself complacently before the mirror.

"Upon my word! how well I look. Your coat fits me perfectly. I shall surely get the place."

He borrowed his usual twenty francs, and, without taking time to thank me, he was off, leaving his red shirt, gray hat, sword and boots. Five minutes later, he reappeared out of breath.

"I forgot to take gloves. Ah, here are some."

He immediately began to rummage about in a half-open drawer.

"Which shall I take?" he asked. "Black, don't you think

so? They are more serious looking. Thanks! Good-by. I'll see you again *soon*."

That "soon" was a long time. For six months I heard nothing from my friend. Finally, I encountered him in Paris. He at once began a long tirade of explanation.

"Ah, I am such a careless fellow! I should have come to see you before. You did me such a favor. At Bordeaux, you remember."

I remembered very well, and I told him so.

"That very day I became secretary to a deputy; I still hold the position. He is very well pleased with me. I wrote a little speech for him which was a great success. He raised my wages; I get five hundred francs now. We belong to the extreme right. If we could enter the wall to get further to the right, we would do so."

Three months later, we met again. Mussard carried a splendid portfolio of red morocco under his arm.

"How's your deputy?" I asked.

"My deputy"! Say 'my deputies' rather. I have two of them at present."

"Explain."

"My deputy of the right used me only mornings. I was at liberty after two o'clock, so I entered the service of another, of the extreme left, this time. He is one of the men elected last July, a democrat, and a rich one, too. He pays me five hundred a month, the same as the other. I think I do pretty well, to manage both of them. But I have never lacked in facility. I wrote for newspapers under the Empire in all kinds of veins, sometimes for the government, sometimes against it, and sometimes both for and against. Now I have the most interesting of two-party practice. You see this portfolio."

"Yes."

"Well, both my deputies are in it. In the right pocket Chambord; in the left, Gambetta. The papers get mixed sometimes, and there is a pretty intermingling of fleur-de-lis and poppies. I have filled this double position for three months without the least fatigue. I am forming for myself useful and solid relations in the political and business world, and one of these days I shall be able to make use of my deputies to launch myself in some profitable enterprise."

Three months later, this very thing was accomplished. I

met Mussard riding in a carriage, hired by the month, it is true, but a carriage, nevertheless. He was president of a large electrical company to be formed at Marseilles—but which was never formed, I might mention incidentally.

After 1873, my poor friend began a series of presentations to me under various aspects: editor of different papers, director of all sorts of enterprises, and so on. From Plevna, under the fire of Turkish cannon, he wrote me a brilliant Parisian letter. He forwarded me from Constantinople the first number of his French newspaper, bearing on its title-page these words: *Etienne Mussard, Editor-in-chief*. I did not receive the second number; it never appeared; the usual fate of the papers he started.

For a long time after this, there was no news of my versatile friend. No more inventions, no more journals, no more anything! And, I must confess, I missed him! This fact was to my credit, for, after all, his disappearance was a great saving to me.

On Tuesday, January 19, 1886, as I was walking along a street in Paris, about seven o'clock in the evening, I saw a coupé stop a few steps ahead of me, and I heard the driver call for the gate to be opened. I continued to advance until I had to halt to allow the carriage to cross the pavement just ahead of me. The gaslight fell full upon me, and just as the vehicle was about to pass under the *porte-cochère* of a very elegant private hotel, I heard my name spoken and saw a face at the window. It was my old friend Mussard.

He leaped out to the sidewalk, and, urging me along with him, ascended the four steps of a veranda facing a court. Here he turned me over to a footman, who courteously drew off my overcoat. He tossed his own costly fur coat over a leather-covered chair, and ushered me into a little apartment, hung in red velvet, in which four great logs crackled in an immense fire-place—a genuine millionaire's fire. A torrent of words followed.

"So it is you, is it! What an ungrateful fellow I am to let you hear nothing from me for two years, since I have become rich! For I am rich. This hotel is mine; the coupé in which I drove up is mine, and the horses, too. I have three more in the stable. These valuable paintings are all mine, and I have a round sum in the bank. And to think that I did not hunt you up to thank you; you, who in my

bad days never abandoned me! I am going to pay you back all the money you lent me this very night. It will be a nice sum, and I know you never expected to get it. You might as well own up to it. You didn't believe me when I promised to pay you, but you were wrong. You shall see your account, and your money, too. Come, come."

As he spoke, he urged me along again. As for myself, I was completely bewildered. We crossed a spacious salon, in which another bright fire crackled. We entered a library furnished with sumptuous simplicity, in the center of which stood a massive oak table covered with papers, pamphlets, journals, etc. Mussard took an account book out of a drawer.

"Here is your account. Five louis, five louis, five louis, then seven louis, given separately. You lessened the loans," this with a smile. "Then five louis again. The reply to my letter from Plevna. Just think! I was at Plevna! What a strange episode of my life! Then separate louis again. The sum total is fifty-five louis. I will pay you now."

He took from the same drawer a large, black morocco pocket-book in which were carefully arranged a respectable number of bank notes, and he paid me!

I repeat it: he paid me! I actually held the bills in my hand! I could not find a word to say in reply to him. I was simply suffocated with astonishment. Mussard went on:

"And now you must do me a great favor. You must dine with me. No excuses, I shall keep you. You are dressed for the evening. You were going to dine at some club. Give me the preference. I have so many things to tell you. How I made my fortune, first of all. Then, too, I have some one to show you; I am expecting a singular guest, a Bolivian general; a genuine article. He calls himself Moyabamba; he's coming to talk over a question of railroads in Bolivia. I feel quite sure that you have never dined with a Bolivian general."

"Never, indeed," I found words to reply.

"Well, you will, this evening. There is a beginning to all things."

Mussard rang. A domestic appeared instantly. The establishment was certainly a well-ordered one.

"Have another cover laid."

"Yes, *Monsieur le comte*."

So Mussard was a count! Count Mussard!

My astonishment became stupor. I must have shown my feelings, for Mussard broke out into boisterous laughter.

"Ah, I forgot; you do not know that I have become a count. One can imagine nothing more ridiculous; but, *mon Dieu*, what would you? The title dropped down upon me from the skies last year. I rendered a service to a poor boy, a Royal Highness, if you please, the son of a prince. It was only a matter of about two thousand francs. The young man obtained the title of 'Count' for me out of gratitude. It cost less than to repay the money. I hesitated before burdening myself with the title. But it really fitted my name very well, so 'Count Mussard' I became."

I was by this time divided between anxiety and curiosity. I had evidently entered a singular and dangerous world, still the coming dinner with Count Mussard and General Moyabamba was very tempting. If I let such an occasion pass, it certainly would never return again.

Soon the general was announced. At sight of him I hesitated no longer. He was most astonishing. He was short and stout, with the shoulders of a Hercules. His eyes wore a fierce expression; his gray hair was brushed straight up and his heavy mustache was of the deepest black. A large scar across his brick-colored face gave him a sinister appearance.

He wore a correct evening costume, and his breast was covered with decorations. A commander's cross hung suspended from his neck by a broad yellow ribbon, and a jeweled ornament sparkled from the left lapel of his black coat.

"What an elaborate costume for such a small dinner, general!" exclaimed Mussard.

"It is not for you, my dear count," replied the guest; "I am going out to a musicale this evening."

He spoke with a decided accent. Was it that of Bolivia, or of Marseilles or Toulouse? I could not decide, but I afterward learned that a theatrical manager had offered him an engagement solely because of his personal appearance and strange accent. It seemed to me now that I was on the stage of the *Palais-Royal*, and that I was to play a modest rôle in a vaudeville. I expected to partake of a theatrical dinner with all the traditional accessories; pasteboard chicken and pâtés, spiced bread cut in the form of cutlets, and effervescent lemonade in place of champagne.

I was presented to the general, and we all sat down to dinner, a real one, the arrangement of which was the simplest and most elegant. Mussard was in high spirits, and he did nearly all of the talking. The general ate, ate, ate, and drank, drank, drank. I never before saw any one eat and drink so much. The spectacle became highly interesting.

From a brick-red he became cherry-colored, then crimson. He visibly dilated in rotundity until it seemed to me he had reached the limit of distension. I thought that he was going to burst.

He did not do that, but he had all he could do to cross the room after the meal. He did not walk; he fairly rolled, and sank down in a heap in an easy chair. Mussard made the coffee himself, Turk fashion. As the fragrant liquid steamed up in the cups, the host, in a state of perfect bliss, told me how fortune had at last smiled upon him.

"You know I was always at some scheme or another. Well, finally I fell upon one that succeeded. I was one of a company to promote a gold mine on the Congo. The public was slow in subscribing to stock. We had only three days left in which to raise the required sum, and it seemed as if the whole matter was about to fall through.

"'We must hatch up some scheme for interesting the public!' one of the company said to me.

"His remark rang in my ears, and one day as I was passing the Madeleine, I saw an enormous negro, shabbily dressed, coming toward me. The fellow stopped on seeing me and cried, 'Is that you, Mussard?' It was Loulou; my little groom, you remember.

"At sight of him, an idea flashed upon me. Loulou was to come from the Congo! The next day, transformed into an African nabob under the name of Maroko, the negro was sumptuously installed at the Grand-Hôtel in the royal apartments. I rented a splendid carriage which had been used once for a royal wedding. In this, Loulou went to the *Bois* and the races. He was an immense success. He received twenty declarations of love and offers of marriage in as many days. He was shrewd and intelligent, too, and I coached him. He received reporters and talked to them enthusiastically about our mines on the Congo. The entire press exploited our nabob, and, incidentally, our mines. Our subscription was soon trebly covered. Then Loulou disappeared,

promising never to return to Paris. We agreed to pay him the small sum of three thousand francs, which he had well earned. He is now living quietly in a provincial town, where he married a lodging-house keeper."

I was positively uneasy as my friend proceeded, and I could not help showing it.

"It was all very clever, wasn't it?" he remarked.

"Very; a little too clever, I might say."

"Ah, my dear boy, one must look at things from a certain point of view. Business is business. First of all, one must succeed, and we have succeeded beyond all expectation. There has not been a hitch from the very first, not a false operation. Though business is rather dull at the present time, we find a way to pick up a little money. We have added mineral waters; they always go. We have promoted half a dozen springs whose waters are entirely harmless. We are in a position to choose now. That is why we don't care to have anything to do with your Bolivian railroad bonds, general. We have no confidence in them."

Hearing himself addressed, and the Bolivian railroad mentioned, the general roused himself.

"No confidence!" he exclaimed; "why, it is a superb affair; an assured success!"

"A superb affair possibly," replied Mussard; "but as for being an assured success, that is doubtful."

"It is a pity you do not favor the scheme. I would have liked to take you in with us."

"What do you mean?"

"Give you an interest in the business. When one does not understand a language very well, it is hard to express exactly what one means. I will try to make you understand. Bolivia is a wonderful, unexplored country. There is everything in Bolivia—everything, everything—gold, silver, copper, forests. I know the country by heart. I fought in its wars for twenty years; in foreign wars and civil wars. The civil wars were the best paying ones. Then everything is permissible, and even honorable. One can make counterfeit money, hold up coaches, and the like. I am sure that neither of you gentlemen ever played the brigand and robbed coaches. I assure you that nothing is more amusing. At present, nothing of that kind can be done, as the government is strong. I have now decided to devote myself to commercial and in-

dustrial affairs. Revolutions are more profitable, I know but there are none. One of them made me a colonel, another gave me a chance to win my general's epaulets; still another brought me this decoration, the highest recompense that can be given to a soldier."

Here the general attracted our attention to the jeweled decoration which blazed out from his black coat.

"I have it sewed on, you see. If I were to commit the slightest indelicacy or forfeit my honor, it would drop off of itself. That alone ought to reassure you regarding the affair I propose to you."

By this time my anxiety had changed into positive terror. I feared every moment lest the door should open to admit officers of the law. I might be caught in a trap. I rose abruptly, pleaded an engagement, and succeeded in making my escape.

Once outside I seemed to be awakening from a dream. Then I remembered the thousand francs. If the bills were in my pocket, I had really seen Mussard instead of fancying that I had. I felt for them; they were there!

An exchange shop stood near. I stepped in, and, addressing a clerk who was reading his paper behind the grating, I said:

"Pardon me, monsieur, but I would like to ask you for some information. Will you kindly examine these bills and tell me if they are genuine?"

The man regarded me with a surprised air, then took the bills and examined them carefully. Handing them back, he said:

"They are good."

That was all I wanted to know. I had dined with my friend Mussard, but, it is needless to state, I dined there no more.





N Involuntary Olive- Branch: The Story of a Mutual Antipathy*



WHERE there are so many attractive walks of life, and so many forms of occupation which are alike profitable and interesting, I cannot help regarding in the light of a personal grievance the circumstance that the accident of my residence in our quiet country village should have apparently forced me for several years to occupy the position of a chronic buffer between two opposing forces. It is a position that no sane person would of his own freewill elect to fill, inasmuch as it brings neither pleasure nor emolument. But the necessity of keeping the peace and, generally speaking, the force of circumstances year after year saddled my shoulders with a responsibility which I found as hard to dislodge as Sinbad found the Old Man of the Sea; and I sometimes seem to foresee that I was destined to the end of the chapter to play the part of buffer between those two most excellent but diametrically opposite personalities, the Major and Tommy Lowndes. Perhaps I ought to have blessed my stars that the difference between the two parties was not of the type that implies manual violence, and that in my efforts to keep the peace I was neither threatened by the fire shovel, which the valiant Pott once wielded, nor called upon to encounter the "good thick" and conveniently packed hair-brush, which rendered the rival editor's carpet-bag so formidable a weapon of offence. Still, even a war of words persistently carried on, as it were, in the territory of a friendly neutral power, is, as I found to my cost, apt to wax wearisome, and even exasperating, to the non-combatant.

"One of the rudest young men I've ever met is your particular friend Lowndes, George," the Major would say; "I never can make out what you see to like in him. What he really wants is a thorough good kicking."

"Well, why don't you tell him so, Major?"

*From Blackwood's Magazine.

"Because, my dear boy, a man in my position must have some regard for the *convenances* of life."

"I'll tell you what it is, George,"—always a favorite prelude to Tommy's words of wisdom—"that old Major of yours don't improve with age. He grows more pompous and dictatorial every day. People down here, and you in particular, give him his head too much. It would do him a lot of good if some one burnt his stays—you bet he wears them—or put a match to one end of his moustache. What the devil does he mean by waxing the ends till they look like porcupine quills?"

"Burn them yourself, Tommy, if you want to; it's no business of mine."

"Not so sure about that. You seem to make a sort of private-property business of him. Anyhow, I don't run him."

"I'll tell you what you do do, though, occasionally; and that is, hurt his feelings."

"Good job, too. If someone could only hurt his confounded self-satisfaction it would be better still. What right has a superannuated old fogey like that to be so very superior?"

There were, of course, faults on either side—we none of us attain to absolute perfection: the pity was that things which with the world at large passed as venial offences were magnified into mountainous sins by the two belligerent parties. In reference to our notable match at the park, where neither man had been wholly free from blame, each assumed an aggressive attitude, directing his assaults upon the real antagonist across my defenceless body.

"The day when Lowndes had a convenient sprain, and hired a pro. to bowl for him."

This was the Major's version.

"The match in which the Major would not face the music, and young pudding got cut over on the toe," corrected Tommy.

"When I missed my innings by having to help the poor boy home, and we lost the match in consequence."

"I don't know what you thought, George; one would almost have imagined that her ladyship and her maid, and the saw-bones, and the coachman, and half-a-dozen gardeners, and seven people who had had an innings, might have done the job without the Major's help. But perhaps the Major wanted to hold his hand, or to give the sal-volatile to the little dear. I never saw such a fuss made about a crack on the toe."

"The human foot, let me inform you, my dear Lowndes, is a very delicate and complicated piece of mechanism."

"Is that original, Major, or a quotation from Locke on the Human Understanding?" inquired Tommy ironically. "I would humbly suggest that if young Emden's big toe is such a delicate and precious article of furniture that it requires a dozen men and half a score of women to look after it, he had either better lock himself up in a glass case or cut it off and have done with it. It would look very well, wouldn't it, George, neatly corked up in a bottle and kept on the Major's mantelpiece? In years to come, when it got black, the Major would be able to say it was the only part found of a nigger he sliced up in the what-do-you-call-it campaign."

Such was the sort of sparring which went on by the space of two years whenever the two men encountered each other—a welcome relief, possibly, to the feelings of the gladiators, but very embarrassing to the audience.

However, for the eighteen months during which Tommy, who had joined our local yeomanry, was serving his country in South Africa, there was comparative peace and contentment at home, and the Major was a great authority in our parts on the way in which the war ought to have been carried on, and in the absence of the somewhat over-candid critic laid down the law pretty freely.

"Roberts," he would say, "was a bit too mealy-mouthed for scoundrels of the Boer type, and I am not quite sure whether 'K,' as they call him, is exactly the stamp of man I should have chosen for the job. Deuced good organizer and all that, I grant you, but not a downright good fighting man. No, no; the sort of general we want out there is one of the old school—no red tape man, but a fellow like old Pennefather was. Poor old Pennefather, as I may have told you, George, was a sort of connection of my own, and I'll be hanged if I don't think that the fighting instinct is hereditary. However——!" and he sighed before inquiring, "Heard anything, by the way, George, about your friend Lowndes? I did offer to give him a few hints on the art of campaigning before he started, but of course, like all young fellows, he was much too self-satisfied and too cock-sure about everything to take the trouble to come round."

It was indeed true that the worthy Major had talked to me, or, to be more correct, at me, on the subject of Tommy'

campaigning, and had thrown out strong hints to the effect that if the young yeoman, prior to starting, cared to call on the retired soldier, he might gather some wrinkles on the art of combining active service with the least possible discomfort; and I had duly reported the conversation to Tommy, as I knew that it was meant to be repeated, not without some faint hope that he might accept the olive-branch thus indirectly tendered. But Tommy, obstinate to the core, had received the proposition with huge disdain.

"Rather like the old Major's hints on cricket, I should imagine," he observed; "standing behind a net and saying he could do it better himself, eh, George? Lessons in the art of being conveniently absent when the balls are flying about, or the principles of scientific commissariat personally adopted. Thank you, George; I have got plenty to do before I start, without putting on the Major as coach. Tell him, with my love, that he had better do a little practicing instead of preaching. He may be a bit too old and too well-conditioned—what a stomach the old man is getting!—to chase Brother Boer, but he might go and re-learn the goose-step in a garrison. Tell him they would make him mess-president, and chief of the staff, and so forth, and he'll go like a shot!"

Not the *ipsissima verba*, or anything like them, of course, ever reached the Major's ears through my medium; but I at once salved my own conscience and tickled the Major's vanity by inventing a polite message from Tommy to the effect that he was "awfully sorry" that his spare time before sailing was so limited as to make it impossible for him to avail himself of the Major's assistance. On the whole, the worthy veteran accepted the position rather gracefully, and during Tommy's absence, which lasted for some eighteen months, not only abstained from making any disparaging remarks, but even inquired from time to time whether I had received any tidings of our "young yeoman."

But, "Oh what a tangled web," etc. If I had noted with satisfaction that our Major was beginning to regard his neighbor's proceedings through more rose-colored spectacles, I was totally unprepared for the latest result of Tommy's supposititious act of graciousness. For when the war came to an end, and Tommy, who had gone through a fair amount of hard fighting without further mishap than a grazed shoulder, and had been specially commended by his general for a

plucky bit of scouting, was reported to be on the high seas *en route* for home, I one afternoon received a note marked "Urgent" from the Major.

"DEAR G.,—Come round to my place, *if possible*, to-night, as I want to consult you about giving a fitting reception to our gallant young friend on his return from the campaign in which he has played so worthy a part.—Yours, H. OWEN.

"P.S.—Are you not a bit of a poet? A few original lines on the arch would be very appropriate. If you won't undertake this, I must even try my 'prentice hand. I have got several ideas for a start."

As I had some preliminary acquaintance with Tommy's views on the subject of public demonstrations, it occurred to me at once that the principal character in the tableau which the Major was contemplating was more likely to be conspicuous by absence than by presence. However, I strolled round to the Major's domicile in the course of the evening, to find the occupant evidently in the agonies of composition. Having hurriedly stowed away two or three books in a convenient drawer, lighted up a pipe, and invited me to do the same, he put me into a chair and plunged at once into the details of the proposed reception.

The samples that he was pleased to show me of sundry promising beginnings of what I may call the Ode of Welcome suggested the idea that the poet had drawn his inspiration from Hymns Ancient and Modern, and that his ideas of versification were of a somewhat crude order.

"They are only in the rough at present, George," he remarked; "but I think I can manage to work up something out of one or two of them."

In the rough, therefore, as I found them, I venture to present the most promising specimens to my readers:

I
 "When yeoman Lowndes went off to war
 With martial order { fired,
 { filled,
 Our hearts with expectation sore
 { fluttering { stilled
 { longing { tired

II
 We greet thee, Thomas, { warrior tried and leal,
 { warrior true,
 Returned to peaceful climes.
 Our hearts with exultation thrill
 After most dolorous times.

III
 Hail to our yeoman! hail to thee!
 Who courtedst war's alarms;
 Our greeting warm 'tis thine to see,
 Returned to peace's charms."

Having read the story of Gil Blas and the Archbishop, and convinced by a little knowledge of mankind that the feelings of an author, when personally confronted by a candid though friendly critic, are akin to those of a cooped hen who sees one of her chickens handled by an interfering biped, I should in any case have hardly ventured to suggest corrections. But I soon discovered that active interference on my part was not on the programme. For the Major, acting as his own critic—dare I say trumpeter?—kept up a running commentary as he handed me the various slips of paper.

"You see, George, why I substituted 'yeoman' for 'Tommy.' I had the sort of feeling, you know, that a Christian name abbreviated was hardly formal enough for a public occasion; and besides, people might have thought I meant Tommy Atkins. Good word 'leal,' don't you think, George? A bit stronger and more expressive than 'true.' And I think that line about 'expectation sore' hits the right nail on the head. Terribly anxious we were, weren't we? For months together, too. Of course, when I wrote down 'Thomas, warrior,' etc., I had Thomas the Rhymer in my head, comes in Scott's ballads. A good poet of his sort, Sir Walter; though, now I come to think of it, Aytoun might be a better model. Pity, isn't it, that those Dutch names are so unsentimental, or we might have had something after the style of *The Burial March of Dundee*. 'Climes' is a good word; goes well with 'times,' doesn't it?"

So ran on the Major, and all I had to do for a good half-hour was to sit still and nod my head at intervals like a Chinese mandarin.

But at last I ventured to ask for a little more definite information as to the coming pageant.

"And what's your programme exactly, Major?" I inquired.

"Well, what I thought was this: We'll take an open carriage of a sort down to the station—her ladyship, no doubt, will lend us her landau—then we'll have a few ferns and flowers on the platform; take the horses out of the carriage, and draw Lowndes home. It's only just over the half mile, and there'll be plenty of stout young fellows who'll lend a hand for a pint of beer. And we will have the village school marshalled behind the carriage to sing 'See the Conquering Hero Comes,' or something of the sort appropriate to the occa-

sion. They go in for that style of thing at the board school and I will just drop a hint to the schoolmaster to teach them to sing a thing more or less in tune. Then when we come to the arch, which I am going to have erected just at the turn to his mother's house, we will call a halt, and I will either present Lowndes with an address or perhaps, better still, make an impromptu speech. I've had to do that sort of thing once or twice in my life—and things said like that on the spur of the moment come so much more naturally. However, as Lowndes is very likely not a great orator, I have jotted down on paper the substance of what one would naturally say on such an occasion. It's hardly fair to take a man quite by surprise, you know, George; and if you are going to run up to town to meet him, it will be a real kindness to give him an idea of our programme, so that he may know what line to take in answering. So here is a rough draught of what I am likely to say. Just shove it into your pocket and show it to Lowndes when you can get a chance."

I duly pocketed the paper before lodging my feeble protest. For I was perfectly certain in my own mind that nothing I could say or do would ever bring Tommy up to the scratch. However, I saw a gleam of hope when the Major suddenly resumed:

"Oh yes, and, by the way, I thought you two fellows and young Emden, and perhaps one or two more, would come and dine here quietly in the evening, and we would get Lowndes to tell us some campaigning yarns."

"Thanks very much, Major; that would be very jolly. But do you know, though all your other arrangements sound very nice and—eh—proper, I am not quite sure that Lowndes will care to go through it all. He is rather—rather—what you may call diffident about that sort of thing."

Alas! I might as well have talked to a brick wall.

"Diffident!" snapped out the Major—"Diffident be d—d! That is just where all you young fellows make a mistake, George," he went on, lapsing into the air of didactic superiority which invariably had the same effect on Tommy Lowndes' temper as a red rag is reputed to have upon a bull's. "You should never let an opportunity pass of fostering a loyal and patriotic feeling in that state of life—that is, in that domestic circle where fortune has placed you. The return of these volunteer soldiers—not that they've done much, poor fellows, how

should they, untrained as they are?—is a sort of national occasion. And if an old soldier puts himself out of his way to organize a suitable reception for our local representative, it is his manifest duty to—eh, what shall I say?—to respond becomingly. And it is your duty, George, as being his most intimate friend, to explain to him what I—that is, his country—expects of him.”

When the Major is once fairly seated upon his high horse, attempts to dislodge him are apt to provoke unpleasantness. So I thought it best to give in on all points, and shortly took my leave, having pledged myself to use my utmost exertions to induce Tommy to regard the matter of the reception from a proper point of view.

II

I am afraid that, having from the outset regarded Tommy's refusal to be fêted as a foregone conclusion, I did not allow my own promised assistance in the transaction to weigh very heavily on my conscience.

To be sure, it was refreshing to see the Major trotting about the village from sunrise to sunset button-holing every other man he met on the way, and holding long consultations at the corner of the street with the board school master, who was evidently armed at all points to play a conspicuous part in the coming display. But it was not till I received a wire from Tommy, who had landed at Southampton, reminding me of my promise to meet him in London, that I was awakened to a due sense of my responsibility; and it was on the journey to London that for the first time I remembered to read over the Major's rough draft of his *impromptu* speech.

“My dear Lowndes,” it ran, “representing, as perhaps I may claim to represent, the military instincts of your native village, I am at this time acting as the mouthpiece of this most loyal community in welcoming you home to the scenes of your childhood, and in expressing to you our warm admiration of the spirit which prompted you at your country's call to doff the garb of peace and assume the panoply of war. That your conduct during the late trying campaign has been such as to merit the special commendation of your commanding officer is more gratifying than surprising to us who have known you so intimately, and we feel that the encomium earned by you reflects credit not only on yourself personally, but on the

village where you received your earliest training. It is, let me add, my dear Lowndes, to us a source of deep satisfaction and of heartfelt gratitude that, escaping as well the perils of shot and shell as of devastating disease, you have been permitted to return to us with what I may indeed call the *mens sana in corpore sano*. Permit me, then, my dear Lowndes, not only in my own name, but in the name of all these present and many absent friends, to extend to you a most hearty welcome. *N.B.*—Here shake hands."

Even as I read this, stage directions and all, the wicked thought occurred to me that there was a tolerably strong scent of midnight oil hanging about the spontaneous utterance of our good Major's overflowing heart, and I found myself rather sorry for the orator if he had been at the trouble of learning his speech by heart. For I had a shrewd suspicion that, like the Roman cobbler's crow, he might shortly have occasion to remark, "*Opera et impensa periit.*" However, it was a consolation to remember that in committing his speech to paper the Major was only following the example of some of our greatest orators, and I charitably hoped that some of his elaborate sentences would serve as stock-in-trade for future occasions.

I found my old friend Tommy looking a bit fine-drawn and very much bronzed, but apparently in excellent health and spirits. We dined together at my club, and I was so much interested in listening to his adventures that neither the Major nor the proposed reception ever again entered my mind till the waiter brought me a telegram forwarded from my lodgings:

"Wire immediately day and train. Essential he should come in khaki."

"Nothing wrong, I hope, George?" inquired Tommy, judging probably from the expression of my face that the contents of the despatch were not of a very welcome nature.

"Well, no, not exactly, but," as I determined to get the thing over and have done with it one way or the other, "it concerns you more than it does me, so I think you had better read it, and this too," and I handed him the telegram, and the Major's rough draft.

"And pray what is the meaning of all this jargon?" inquired Tommy, after casting his eye over the two documents. Give us a key to the riddle, old chap."

Lamely enough, and with many hesitations and apologies,

I gave Tommy a brief *résumé* of the principal acts of the drama in which he was expected to play so conspicuous a part.

"You know the Major means it most awfully kindly, Tommy."

"Devilish kind of him it sounds to try and make a raree-show of me. Great Scott! George, you don't for a minute seriously imagine that I am going to be made an exhibition of for that old dot-and-go-one Major's benefit?"

"Well," I repeated, "he means it kindly, and I know that he has set his heart upon it."

"Then he can jolly well set his heart on something else. This cock won't fight anyhow."

"Couldn't you meet him half way?" I suggested.

"It'll have to be the last half, then," was the reply, and though the words were carelessly spoken, they gave me the clue to a solution of the difficulty.

"Why not the last half, then? Why not come and dine quietly with the Major, and let him make this great oration of his in his own dining-room?"

"What's the French for compromise, eh, George?" exclaimed Tommy, laughing; and then after a momentary pause he added, "But I'm not sure that you are not right, old chap. I don't profess to be particularly in love with your precious Major, as you know. But after all, the old boy meant it kindly, and I do not want to figure as an ungracious beast any more than I want to be exhibited as a sort of prize pig to a lot of yokels. So, if you think fit, George, you can write to the old man that I shall be very glad to avail myself of his kind invitation to dinner, but that the—hum—ha—shattered state of my nerves after scrimmaging with Brother Boer won't allow me to take part in a public ceremonial. In fact, write any rot you like, as long as you square it with the Major somehow. He can spout that balderdash of his at my head at his own table if he likes; but I'll see him somewhere first before I'll have any brass bands and squawking children, or be upset in a ditch by a lot of beery ruffians."

On these lines the matter was finally settled after a little correspondence with the Major, to whom I broke as gently as I could the fact that a team of wild horses would not bring our unwilling Hamlet up to the scratch to play his part in a public ceremony. For all I know to the contrary the Major

tore his hair, rent his clothes, and beat his breast in the orthodox fashion, but he evidently found some consolation in inditing an autograph letter rather after the florid style to Tommy, who from sheer inability to write an answer really appropriate to the occasion simply wired, "Many thanks. Shall be most happy."

A week later the dinner came off with great *éclat*. For one reason or another the affair finally resolved itself into a party of four. "Best number I know but two," as Tommy sagely remarked when the host apologized for having failed to secure a larger attendance to meet the guest of the evening. The Major's cuisine and champagne were alike admirable, and his speech came fully up to sample, having been deftly altered to suit the more private occasion, and containing a telling paragraph anent the speaker's nervousness in arising to address so distinguished an audience, the Right Honorable the Viscount Emden to wit. Tommy really comported himself admirably during the delivery, merely winking at me from time to time, and reducing Emden to the verge of suffocation by muttering "military grandmother!" when the speaker thundered forth "military instinct." But the Major's eloquence flowed on and unchecked, and at the conclusion Emden and I essayed a feeble cheer. The compliment was briefly acknowledged by the guest in a reply apparently modeled on W. G. Grace's Canadian speeches. For, avoiding any allusion to the war, Tommy informed us that he had never eaten a better dinner in his life, and only hoped that he might never have to eat a worse.

Nor was it till late in the evening that any discordant element was introduced, by the Major suddenly launching off into a learned disquisition on the merits of golf. There had come something like a frost over the park cricket since the disastrous termination of our memorable match, and latterly the Major, who still acted as voluntary bear-leader to young Emden, had taken it into his head that the latter would be better fitted to assume his proper position in society if he was properly initiated into the mysteries of golf. Perhaps our sagacious veteran had the feeling that, taking all the surroundings into consideration, where the pupil is naturally awkward, instruction in the art of golf is attended with less personal risk to the instructor than either shooting, cricket, or even squash rackets, in each of which the Major had attem-

tempted to give his *protégé* lessons. And so it had come to pass that, with Lady Emden's sanction, a golf course had been laid out in the park, and a club partially established, and nothing was wanting to assure the due registration of what we hoped to call the "Royal Overton Golf Club" but the completion of the pavilion, and the formal opening of the course by the Duke of Tufton, who happened to be a distant cousin to Emden, and was lord-lieutenant of our county.

"You'll join our golf club, of course, Lowndes," remarked the Major. "You can come in now as an original member for two guineas. Later on we shall have a rush upon the thing, and a big entrance fee."

"I shall be most happy to lump down my two guineas, Major, if it is any satisfaction to you, but I don't play the game."

"Never too late to learn, my dear fellow, never too late to learn. I'll very soon make a player of you."

"Hum," said Tommy doubtfully. "I was rather thinking myself that it was a bit too early to learn. It always strikes me as being an old man's game. When I have got to a stage when I can't hit things that run and fly, I shall take a turn at mowing—I mean swinging—at a stationary ball, and potting partridges on the feed."

If that inane young donkey Emden had not thought fit to explode into a loud guffaw, the Major might now have let the matter drop. But as it would clearly never do to let the boy imagine that his preceptor had got the worst of an argument, he now assumed his most didactic manner.

"Pray do not be under any misapprehension about it, my dear Lowndes," he retorted. "When you grow a bit older and wiser you will find that the proper method of striking what you call a stationary ball is a good deal more difficult of attainment than anybody who has not tried it is apt to think. It took me four good years to get a proper swing. Golf, let me tell you, is far and away the most scientific of our outdoor games, because the elements of chance and of brute force do not come in as they do in cricket and so forth."

In an instant Tommy, a cricketer from boyhood, was up in arms, with a whole train of possible and impossible propositions.

In the first place, golf was not one of *our* outdoor games—it happened to come from Scotland, and he heartily wished

it had stayed there. Moreover, any fool could play golf after a fashion, while it took a wise man to make a cricketer. Was it not a well-established fact that any decent cricketer could play a respectable game of golf with a few days' practice, while a man who had played golf all his life would be hopelessly at sea if you put a cricket-bat into his hand?

Finally came the old *argumentum ad hominem*.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Major. I will take you on at your own game, and play you on your own course for a fiver a side."

"Bravo, Lowndes!" exclaimed Emden, who still clung to his old Etonian idea that a former captain of his house eleven must of necessity be one of the greatest athletes of the day.

"What's your handicap?" inquired the Major, with the characteristic caution of the old golfer.

"Handicap!" exclaimed Tommy—"handicap be hanged! I'm not going to give you any start, or take one either. It's not a weight-for-age selling race, is it?"

"Every golfer, my dear Lowndes, has his recognized handicap. It is, as you surely know, one of the most important principles of the game, as regulating the start to be given or received to ensure the equalization of the chances of success."

"The devil it is!" exclaimed Tommy. "Well, then, I am sorry to say that the chances of success in this particular game will have to go without equalization. I only hit at a golf-ball once in my life, and then I broke the silly stick, and had to fork out five bob for a new one. If you and I are to play, Major, we'll have to start all square, and it will be a case of devil take the hindermost—I mean he'll have to pay up and look pleasant. So there."

For a minute or so the Major seemed to hesitate about accepting the challenge so boldly offered, although, according to his own line of argument, he apparently had a soft thing in taking on a man who had never played golf at even terms. Five-pound notes do not grow on hedgerows in our part of the world, and I had fully expected him to accept Tommy's offer with avidity. But his hesitation seemed to simply that he either entertained a lurking suspicion that Tommy was not quite such a novice at the game as he professed to be, or that in his heart of hearts he knew that the latter was partially correct in asserting that a cricketer with a good eye is potentially a golfer of a sort. The Major's own golf, so far as my

very limited capacity enabled me to judge, was of the steady and theoretical rather than the brilliant and practical type, and although he could make rings round Emden or myself, I already fancied that in Tommy Lowndes, who possessed the happy knack of playing most games indifferently well, though often in a most unorthodox style, he might find a far more formidable antagonist.

"You're not going to back out, Major, are you?" suggested Tommy, by way of bringing his adversary's courage up to the sticking point. "I shan't cut you over on the toe, you know."

"Most certainly not," retorted the Major. "But at the same time, let me tell you, Lawndes, that it is no joke to be hit by a golf ball. In fact, I have seen a man very seriously hurt by a careless player, and so I hope that we shall have none of the reckless hitting that characterizes your cricket." And then, as if satisfied that he had got his own back again with interest, he went on more calmly: "I shall be most happy to ratify a match on the terms you propose, any day you like to mention. I don't pretend to say that my game is quite what it was—but—"

"But mine is," interpolated Tommy; it's "what you call *in statu quo*; at least that's the Latin for non-existent, isn't it, Emden? Right you are, then, Major! Shall we say to-morrow week, eleven o'clock sharp. That will give me time to run up to my office for a couple of days, and then buy some sticks and things, and have a little quiet practice somewhere by the salt sea waves. You shan't have to run against an untried horse, Major, I'll promise you. Good night, and many thanks—we've had a rare good evening, and we'll have a rare good match next week."

"Who are you going to play with, Tommy?" I inquired, as we walked part of the way together to our respective homes.

"You!" was the prompt answer. "Now don't say you can't come, because you've got to come. I will run down on Friday night to Barford-on-Sea, and take some diggings, or go to the Dormy House. I'll square that all right."

"But won't you get on better by yourself with a pro.?" I suggested.

"Get on better with a fiddlesticks! I don't want a fellow who'll try to make me stand with my legs like a pair of compasses, and my arms as stiff as a poker. No, no, George; unaided light of nature will have to win this match."

Unaided light of nature, however, refused to shine kindly on Tommy during our first day's practice, in the course of which he broke two drivers and lost three balls, the latter misfortune being due to his inclination to "pull" and "slice" alternately, a method of progression for which the somewhat narrow course, abounding in dykes and whyns, was eminently unadapted.

"Won't do," remarked the unsuccessful player decisively at the end of the day. "I guess we shall have to remodel the situation."

And he remodelled it on the following morning by paying his second visit to the professional's shop and requesting to be armed with a weapon "which no mortal man could break."

"Is it a nubbluck ye'll be wanting?" queried the rather dour Scotsman with some irony.

"Let's have a look at her," and after weighing the weapon critically in his hand, Tommy announced that it was, *par excellence*, the best club he had yet seen.

"Real good bit of wood, this, George, something solid to get hold of, not like those gimcrack things I tried yesterday. It's got a more respectable blade, too."

"Would I be putting a new heid to yon drivers?" inquired the Scotsman.

"No, I shall drive with this," was the reply.

"Hoot, mon! Who ever heard tell of a man driving fra the tee with a nubbluck?"

"I mean to, anyhow," said the unabashed Tommy; "you can come and see if you like!"

And as it was a slack time of year, and we had the links pretty well to ourselves, the professional put down a club he was mending and followed us to the teeing-ground, where Tommy, hitting with his new toy for all he was worth, successfully carried the first bunker.

"What do you think of that?" he inquired.

"It's no just canny!" was the cautions reply, and the Scotsman walked slowly back to his den to digest the new sensation of having seen the bunker carried with a niblick.

Tommy was so immensely taken with his new weapon, that he absolutely declined to take any other club out with him, thereby dispensing with the assistance of a caddie, whom he was pleased to define as "a dirty little scoundrel who was paid a lot for putting you off your game by grinning at you."

The new departure in the way of employing unorthodox methods was so far crowned with success that Tommy distinctly improved on his earlier performances, and by the end of the third day was becoming very deadly on the putting-green. Remembering our own course at the Park was as yet in a very primitive stage of development, and that, owing to a good deal of rough ground and long grass, highly scientific play was rather at a discount, I began to think that there was some method in his madness, and that a niblick might, in his hands, prove a more useful implement than it is generally supposed to be.

Not Goliath of Gath, when David advanced to the attack with a sling, was more contemptuously indignant than our good Major at the appearance of the niblick, the introduction of which he resented as a violation of the laws of the etiquette of the game.

"Haven't you got a caddie, Lowndes?" he inquired.

"Don't want one, thanks."

"Are you going to carry your own clubs, then?"

"Well, yes. I am going to carry my own club!" replied Tommy, accentuating the singular number.

"But you are not going to play through the game with that thing?"

"That's just where you're wrong, Major, because I am. There is no rule against it in my book."

The Major frowned, breathed hard, and for a moment seemed inclined to argue the point. However, he thought better of the matter, and walked off to meet his groom, who had appeared in the distance, carrying a formidable array of clubs.

"First blood for me, George," quietly remarked Tommy. "I've got a book of the rules in my pocket, and know most of it by heart. I wasn't going to have the old man inventing as he went on."

They halved the first two holes, the Major won the third, and at the fourth came the first appeal to the referee, in which capacity I was called upon to act.

"Here, I say, Major, that won't do!" Tommy exclaimed, as his adversary, having driven his ball into some water, claimed the right of lifting without a penalty.

"Casual water," ejaculated the Major; "most ordinary by-law!"

"Casual water be hanged!" retorted Tommy. "That pond has been there for the last twenty years, to my certain knowledge. I used to come and catch tiddlers in it when I was a kid."

"In a pond, possibly, or even in the pond, but not in the overflow of the pond. There is a very great distinction between the two. The Nile, for instance, my dear Lowndes," continued the Major, aggravatingly didactic, being fed by two great lakes, is subject to yearly inundations; but even those would come under the heading of casual water, as being only existent at certain times of the year. If, that is, I were to drive my ball into the actual bed of the Nile——"

"You'd have made a deuced fine drive!" interpolated Tommy, by way of supplying an apodosis. "Come, come, Major; this is golf, not a geography lesson! Let's refer it to George."

As the pond had evidently been considerably enlarged by the rains of an abnormally wet summer, I gave the Major the benefit of the doubt, and allowed him to lift. But, attempting to use his brassey on the rather rough ground, he topped his ball badly, and there was no doubt on this occasion about its having found its way into the pond proper.

Ours was a nine-hole course, and when they were all square at the end of the first round, I was inclined to fancy Tommy's chances. Hereabouts, however, in the game, he began to have all the worst of the luck, and was especially unfortunate in the matter of two stymies, one laid by the Major being just outside of the six-inch limit, while when Tommy returned the compliment at the very next hole, his opponent was by the merest fraction of an inch entitled to have the ball lifted.

"What a rotten rule!" exclaimed Tommy. "I suppose that is where the delicate and scientific side of the game comes in. Fancy a beastly half-inch being allowed to make the difference of two holes."

"I am afraid, my dear Lowndes, that we can hardly modify the rules of the game to suit every individual player. Speaking from a personal point of view, I should have been delighted to pick up my ball for you on the last green. But after all, golf is golf, and we must play the game. That's dormy two by the way."

At the next hole, the longest on our course, there was another incident, and again Tommy was the sufferer. Always a good fighter in an uphill game, he had made what promised

to be his best drive of the day, the ball going off that astonishing niblick hard and straight at the sort of angle one associates with a good stroke from a wooden club. Unfortunately, at the very moment of his addressing the ball, an errant donkey, which varied its time between drawing the mowing machine over the greens and grazing the more luxuriant grass, took it into his perverse head to walk straight across the line of fire.

It would be a hard matter to decide whether Tommy or the donkey was the more annoyed by the unexpected. The latter, intercepting the ball in full flight with his bony hind-quarters, squealed loudly, kicked up his heels, and fled incontinently to seek pastures new. Tommy, as he watched this ball rebound off the donkey's stern into a patch of long grass, threw down his club, and anathematized the innocent cause of the mishap.

"D—n your donkey, Major!" he exclaimed. "He has spoilt my drive. I am not likely to make such a good one again—I—"

"I am afraid you won't get a chance till the next hole, my dear fellow," said the Major blandly. "That's what we call a rub of the green."

"Rub of the donkey, more likely!" was the angry retort "You don't call a donkey the green, do you?"

"Well, it's a technical phrase for any unforeseen obstruction."

So explained the Major, and when Tommy appealed to me I was obliged to give it against him.

With a face of disgust Tommy picked up his club and walked after his ball, to find it lying some thirty yards behind the Major's, in the very center of a small circular patch of tough stalks of half-mown cow-grass.

"What the dickens do I do now?" inquired the aggrieved player. "I don't lose a stroke for lifting this, do I?"

"There's no question of lifting, unfortunately; the ball is in sight, and quite playable," came from the Major, and again I felt bound to uphold his decision.

"Well, of all the rotten rules that were ever invented!" exclaimed Tommy.

"*Summum jus summa injuria*," quoted the Major. "There must be slight inequalities in every hard-and-fast set of laws, my dear Lowndes. Personally, of course, I should have no

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to be his best move of the day. The real game of the astonishing attack had been played in the heart of the associates with a good success. It was a wooden one. Unfortunately, at the very moment of his approaching the tall and errant donkey, which turned its nose towards the mowing machine over the grass and pressing the luxuriant grass with its nose, it was about to walk straight across the line of fire.

It would be a hard matter to describe the Tommy of the donkey was the more surprised by the unexpected. The latter, interpreting the fall in the light with his four quarters, squealed loudly, raised its head and feet incessantly to seek pasture new. Tommy, as he watched the ball rebound off the donkey's head and a patch of long grass threw down his club and approached the innocent cause of the mishap.

"D—n your donkey, Major," he exclaimed. "He has spoilt my drive. I am not likely to make such a good one again—I—"

"I am afraid you won't get a chance all the next time my dear fellow," said the Major blantly. "That's what we call a rub of the green."

"Rub of the donkey, more likely," was the angry retort.

"You don't call a donkey the green, do you?"

"Well, it's a technical phrase for any unforeseen obstruction."

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"Well, of all the rotten rules that were ever invented!" exclaimed Tommy.

"Summum jus summum injuria," quoted the Major. "There are inequalities in every hard-and-fast set of laws, and I should have no hesitations. Personally, of course, I should have no

objection to your lifting; but after all, golf is golf, and one must play the game."

"I think I've heard that remark before! Many thanks, Major, all the same. All I can say is, that if the delicate science of golf includes a donkey's rump, foot-rules, and nettle-grubbing, I should call skittles a better game. Playable you call it—here goes, then!" and Tommy commenced a vigorous assault on the cow-grass.

It is never wise policy, I have been told, to stand by and make remarks to a heated antagonist who is trying to dig a ball out of an impossible bunker with a niblick, or any form of heavy iron. Now, however, the Major, already discounting in his own mind his fortunately won victory, took his stand about three yards off the offending patch and counted Tommy's strokes.

"The odd!"

"Two more!"

"Three more!"

"Four more!"

Here Tommy paused to take breath, and to vow that he would never come out golfing again without a spade or a pickaxe.

"You can give up the hole, of course," suggested the Major, by way of encouragement.

"And the match too, I suppose. Many thanks, Major. Not quite yet, though. There's a longish way to travel to the green, and you may get down into a bottomless pit for all I know to the contrary. Or that precious moke of yours if he has got a spark of gentlemanly feeling about him, may swallow your ball, or I might play out time. Here goes again, anyhow."

"Five more!" resumed the Major.

"Six more!"

"Seven more—oh!"

For the ball, actuated by one of those fits of perversity which on occasion will seize a golf-ball, suddenly bounced out of the cow-grass at right angles, and hit the Major a tolerably sharp crack on the shin.

"Hulloa!" exclaimed Tommy, "that counts something, don't it? Sorry, Major! I hope it didn't hurt you."

"Do you mean to claim the hole, Lowndes?" inquired the

Major viciously, desisting from the occupation of rubbing the injured shin.

"Oh, by Jove! Well, I hadn't thought of it, as a matter of fact, Major. But as you've put it into my head—well, golf is golf, you know, and one must play the game—eh, George?"

"There's nothing more to be said then," said the Major, stiffly feeling himself thus hoist with his own petard.

"Well, I don't know so much about that. Rules may be rules, but fair play is a jewel. What do you say to this, Major? Shall we let that blessed donkey and this blessed cow-grass, or bunker, or whatever you like to call it, and your valuable shin count for nothing, and start the hole fresh?"

But the Major, far too much upset in his temper to recognize the generosity of the proposal, indignantly rejected the compromise, and, picking up his own ball, strode on to the next teeing-ground, where shortly befell him the fate which commonly overtakes the short-tempered golfer. For he fozzled his drive, got into long grass, lost the hole, and the match was halved.

It had been arranged that the two players should lunch at my house, and I will own that the Major's expression of countenance—he preserved, I should add, a stolid silence—did not augur favorably for the hilarity of the meal. But being a real good fellow at heart, though subject, like the rest of us, to his little weaknesses, he thawed visibly under the influences of a well-cooked grouse and a couple of glasses of champagne, insisted on shaking hands across the table with his late antagonist, and finally succeeded in extracting from the latter a promise to come and support the Duke at the formal opening of the Royal Overton Golf Club.

"No speeches, mind you, Major," bargained Tommy.

"Oh, certainly not—that is, not from you, my dear fellow. Perhaps I shall have to say a few words myself, and the Duke will perhaps get on to his legs; but all very short, I can promise you."

Beyond the fact that, when a fortnight later our luncheon came off, the Major's "few words" proved to be somewhat of an equivocal term—he spoke a good twenty minutes by the clock—there was little fault to be found with the arrangements.

The luncheon served in the new pavilion was excellent of its

sort; the twenty or thirty people who partook of it were not too painfully impressed by the solemnity of the occasion; and if the Major was rather unduly verbose, our lord-lieutenant very wisely curtailed his remarks. His Grace, whose appearance was rather that of a jovial country squire than of an ex-Lord President of the Council, appeared to be not a little nervous as to the part he was to play in the formal opening ceremony.

"Would you mind telling me again exactly what I am expected to do, Major Owen?" I heard him inquire as we rose from the table.

"Merely drive the ball off the tee, and declare the club open, your Grace. 'The Royal Overton Golf Club' is the exact title."

"The words are simple enough," observed his Grace; but don't you think that perhaps you had better do the other thing yourself, Major? I have not played golf in years, and was never a good player."

"Better than most of us, I'll guarantee, your Grace," said the Major cheerily. "I'm sure you'll drive quite a good ball, and besides, we are not quite so critical as they are at St. Andrews. If your Grace would wait a minute, I'll bring you a selection of drivers to choose from."

"Just you come along with me, George," whispered Tommy, who had also overheard the conversation; "if my name is Lowndes, there will be ructions presently, so we will just get a good place." And he dragged me off with him.

Quite a respectable gallery of spectators had assembled when, some ten minutes later, the Duke, with the Major in close attendance, issued from the pavilion. For our luncheon party had been recruited by Lady Emden and eight or ten fair visitors who were staying at the Park, as well as by a goodly crowd of villagers, whose presence had been urgently insisted upon by the Major.

"You'll have the chance of seeing the lord lieutenant of the county—a duke, you know, and one of the greatest men of the day—quite close, and perhaps he will talk to some of you."

In fact, according to the Major's representations, the affair seemed likely to be almost as interesting as a funeral, and so quite thirty men in their Sunday clothes, as many women in their newest bonnets, and carrying their latest babies, and a goodly contingent of grinning lads and buxom lasses

were lining either side of the course, all on the tiptoe of expectation.

If the Duke, as he stepped on to the teeing-ground, was undeniably a fine figure of a man, it occurred to me that the creaseless frock-coat, exquisitely fitting trousers, patent leather boots, and tall white hat, eminently suitable attire for a garden party on a warm September day, were rather out of place on a golf-course.

"Allow me, your Grace," said the Major; and with that he stooped down, carefully teed a new ball, handed a driver to the Duke, and then, bowing to the company, made the following announcement:

"His Grace the Lord Lieutenant will now drive the first ball off the tee, and then declare the Roval Overton Golf Club to be formally open."

As the hum of applause which greeted this proclamation subsided, his Grace the Duke firmly gathered himself together, took a mighty drive, and—missed the globe! Moreover, as he slightly overbalanced himself in the effort, his foot slipped, his hat fell off, there was an ominous sound as of the rending of those garments which commonly shroud from view the lower extremities of ducal as well as of ordinary mankind, and—for dukes are human after all—his Grace, by way of declaring our golf-course open, made the remark which seemed most appropriate to the occasion.

"D—n!" he ejaculated, and, as Tommy irreverently remarked later on, "By Jove! the old man meant it, too!"

For the first time in my life I exactly realized what the Roman historian meant when he wrote, "*Horror ingens spectantes perstrinxit.*" No English words could so exactly describe the situation. For a good half-minute an awful silence was only broken by a shocked "Oh!" from Lady Emden, who was standing next to our rector, and a loud guffaw from a rustic in the background. It was then that Tommy Lowndes stepped in to the rescue, and practically redeemed the situation. For doling out to me, by way of a strong hint to follow his example, an unnecessarily hard kick on the ankle, and treating Emden on the other side in the same friendly fashion, he personally inaugurated a vigorous hand-clapping, which was taken up by the whole audience. Under cover of the applause, the Duke, disregarding his hat, and resisting the natural temptation to thrust his hand under his coat-tails

and examine the extent of the damage suffered by those other garments, manfully assaulted the ball for the second time. And this time his effort was so far crowned with success that, struck with great violence, it flew, not perhaps exactly in the direction it was intended to go, but, to borrow a cricket simile, somewhere between point and cover-point, humming close by Johnnie Daws' left ear, and just over the right shoulder of Mrs. Daws' newest baby. Where it landed finally I never had the curiosity to inquire. The great point was that, by what the late Mr. Sutherland might have called "a merciful dispensation of Providence," nobody was killed, and the ball was no longer in evidence on the tee. Amidst a new outburst of applause [the Duke now declared, the Royal Overton Golf-Course to be open, and I was hurried off by Tommy Lowndes into the dressing-room of the pavilion, where we could laugh without fear of interruption.

An hour later we chanced to encounter the Major wending his way homewards, looking tired and profoundly unhappy.

"Poor old chap!" exclaimed Tommy, with new-born sympathy, "he's down on his luck, George. Let us go and cheer him up."

A moment later he was addressing his old enemy.

"Look you here, Major," he exclaimed, "don't you go and take things too much to heart. What does it matter, after all, if the Duke did miss the globe and say d—n? I've done the same myself, and so have you in your time. We had a jolly good show, however, and we are all infinitely obliged to you for the trouble you have taken."

"It is very kind of you to say so, my dear Lowndes, and indeed I saw how kind you were to start that hand-clapping. But," and he sighed, "I'm afraid it will be a bad thing for the club. Her ladyship seemed very much put out, and besides, there were several clergy present. I'm afraid we shall lose a lot of subscriptions."

"Not you!" asserted Tommy confidently. "And by the way, Major, about that fiver which you really won in our match, I'm going to send you a check round to-night as a sort of donation, or entrance-fee, or whatever you like to call it. And, by Jove! sir, if you'll only get your Duke to come and give us a show each season, I'll make it annual."

Even the Major joined in the chorus of the shout of laughter with which Tommy wound up his oration. But something

in his manner seemed to tell me that Tommy's words, though lightly spoken, had touched a softer chord in his heart than that of mere amusement, and when the two men shook hands at parting, I knew that that old hatchet had been buried forever and for aye.

I am no longer called upon to act as "buffer." For to his cronies the Major now describes Tommy Lowndes as "quite the smartest young fellow in our part of the country." "To be sure," he adds, "he is much too modest about himself; but, after all, that is a fault on the right side, though I have it on very high authority"—the Major's information, I may remark, always does come from very high authority—"that Roberts was quite disappointed when he would not accept a commission. The boy did right well in South Africa, you know. Of course, he has had some advantages in having talked over military matters with—well, with other old soldiers besides myself."

"Sound old chap, the Major, when you know him," I have heard Tommy say. "Do you say he is a bit autocratic? Well, and who cares if he does seem to lay down the law occasionally? That is only mannerism. He is a rare good-hearted old boy, and that is the great point, after all."

Curiously enough, too, the Duke's brief visit, has had a salutary effect on the opinions of another important personage in our parish. For my old friend Johnnie Daws, who has hitherto posed as a Radical, and entertained grave doubts as to the wisdom of retaining either the rights of primogeniture or the House of Lords, would now, I think, be inclined to make an exception in favor of one at least of our hereditary legislators.

"Amazing fine old nobleman, the Duke, ain't he, Master George? And what an affable and 'earty-speaking gemmel-man he is, too; said his little d—n when his 'at blowed off and he bust his trousers, just the same as you or me or any one else. And that were a fine 'ard 'it as he made o' the off-side, weren't it? 'Ummed^o past my ear like a swarm o' bees, it did. Not as I wouldn't a put out my 'and and ketohed it if we'd a 'appened to be playing cricket. You never didn't ought to ketch one o' them golf-balls, ought you, Master George?"

"It's not very wise to try, Daws," I replied. "You can thank your stars it didn't *ketch* you."



HE Reckoning: A Story of the Sea, by Herbert Lawrence Stone*

THE ship *Vigilant* swung wide at her moorings behind Alcatraz Island. The ebb of San Francisco Bay swept against the taut cable and rippled noisily about the sharp cut-water beneath her carved figurehead. From the monkey-gaff the stars and stripes snapped briskly in the fresh breeze, her canvas was bent to the skysails and a waiting tow-boat chafed alongside.

Yet the *Vigilant* did not sail. From her forecastle-head came no cheerful chanty giving the time to the many feet that should have been walking the bars smartly around; her windlass was silent and the heavy cable hung motionless from the hawse pipe. Back and forth across the quarter deck in front of the wheel walked Captain Bradshaw. His every motion, the quick, short steps, the clenched fists, the flashing eye, denoted that the captain was angry. There is no denying that he had just cause for anger, and for the time being the two mates kept judiciously out of the way, contenting themselves with the main deck in the waist.

Presently the captain of the tow-boat hailed from the window of the pilot house:

"Well, Cap, what are you goin' to do about it? I can't be hangin' on here all day."

"Go back to 'Frisco then," answered Captain Bradshaw. "I can't go to sea without a crew. I'll have to pick up another one somehow."

"All right. Lemme know when you get one and I'll put 'em aboard and tow you to sea."

"For'ard there," to the second mate, "cast off that line, will you?" and the tug sheered off and headed back to the city.

*Written for Short Stories.

The chief object of Captain Bradshaw's resentment was a certain sailor's boarding master named Jacob Upther—known familiarly along the water front as Dutch Jake—and whenever the captain's thoughts were concentrated on this worthy, which, on the average, was about twice in every minute, his huge hands would clench and an involuntary oath would rise to his lips. To this man Captain Bradshaw had gone when he wanted a crew, and Upther, for the usual consideration of a month's advance (which the crew never saw), had agreed to supply the sixteen A. B.'s that were needed. These men he had duly put aboard the *Vigilant* some twenty-four hours previously, where they had all answered to their names on the ship's articles in approved fashion, on which he had gone ashore with the captain's receipt and the order for the eighteen dollars advance out of each man's pay stowed safely away in an inside pocket.

Now it happened that at the time a westerly gale was blowing and the *Vigilant* did not go to sea that day. So the men were kept at work about the decks until night shut down on them, when they were allowed to turn in. As the ship was moored well out in the stream, in a safe harbor, the second mate, when he came on deck for his anchor watch, did not deem it essential to keep a very strict lookout. With the result that when the officers went to turn the men out at daylight the following morning, they found that the entire crew had jumped the ship and that the forecabin was as empty as though the shipping master had never contracted to put them aboard. Now Captain Bradshaw knew as well as anyone that Dutch Jake was the vilest "crimp" in San Francisco; knew the reports of his many atrocities in obtaining crews and his skill at the fine art of "shanghaieing." Yet he was a little unprepared on going ashore that morning, with blood in his eye, knowing that he would be the laughing-stock of every master in port, to hear that it was Dutch Jake's boat moored to the *Vigilant's* cable in which the men had made their escape. And there was a sinister rumor flying about that Mr. Upther had lifted Captain Bradshaw's crew after collecting his advances and fees, so that he might re-ship them in the *Tam-o'-Shanter*, then awaiting a crew to sail for London.

This *Tam-o'-Shanter* was anchored in the stream not far from the *Vigilant*, and as Captain Bradshaw was put aboard

his own ship again, he could see her sixteen men gathered on the top-gallant forecastle, their bodies bent over the capstan bars as the cable was hove in. And the refrain of the chanty that arose therefrom and drifted across the narrow stretch of water to the listeners on the *Vigilant*, ran:

—"Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
Oh, there's six feet o' water in her lower hold,
So leave her, Johnny, leave her."

A grim smile overspread the features of Captain Bradshaw as he heard the words, but he swore to himself, then and there, that Mr. Jacob Upther would pay a heavy penalty for that night's work. The cable of the *Tam-o'-Shanter* is soon up and down, her anchor broken out and a snub-nosed tow-boat takes her in hand for the trip to the Golden Gate. As she swings under the stern of the *Vigilant* and gets straightened out for the sea, there are seen lining her rail at irregular intervals, some sixteen heads which grin cheerfully at and seem strangely familiar to the three officers who occupy the quarter deck of Captain Bradshaw's vessel.

Here was a pretty pass! The *Vigilant* was channels deep with wheat, ready to sail for Antwerp, with crew lifted, and sailors in San Francisco scarcer than sperm whales in the North Atlantic. And ashore an anxious agent was being driven nearly insane because of the detention, while wheat was soaring higher every day on the Continent. But San Francisco could count more than one shipping agent to its 'cross-sea's trade, and to one of these others Captain Bradshaw betook himself. When he had told of his plight and stated his requirements, the boarding master shook his head:

"Sorry, but I can't fix you out just now. Been blowin' fresh off shore for some time, so there ain't over fifteen deep-water men in all 'Frisco to-day, and Dutch Jake's signed those for the *Ringleader*. I could pick you up a crew of longshoremen or roustabouts, but you wouldn't go to sea with such a lot, so what's the use."

The captain's face clouded. After a pause—

"What's the matter with shippin' Jake's fifteen? I've no scruples."

The agent shook his head:

"He's keepin' 'em pretty close, I can tell you, seein' as the *Ringleader* sails in the mornin'. His runners are already

roundin' 'em too, and by night they'll all be as full as Liverpool cattlemen."

The captain was silent for a moment. Then, "Well, I've got to have the men. They won't be averse to signin' again if you'll give up half the advance you are to get—Dutch Jake doesn't give up any, you know. I'll make it up to you and give you two hundred dollars besides if you put them aboard for the first of the ebb to-morrow. There are fifteen of 'em and on a pinch you can sign Jake himself on for the sixteenth," with a smile. "He was once a man-o'-warsman, they tell me, and I guess ain't forgot the difference between a brace and a tack."

The shipping master laughed. There was no love lost between Upther and him; indeed, they were the keenest of rivals and there was no villainy to which either of them would not have stooped to beat out the other or to sign on a crew. But to do what Captain Bradshaw had suggested was going to great lengths and was a very risky business—much more so than the mere drugging and robbing of sailormen.

Well, he would think it over and see what could be done; and so Captain Bradshaw departed.

Shortly before daylight the following morning, when the hush of dawn had fallen on San Francisco's water-front and the street lamps were but a blur of light struggling through the cold night mist that arose from the bay, an open express wagon rattled out to the end of one of the wharves. From it tumbled, were helped and lifted some fifteen men, followed by a number of long canvas clothes-bags. These bags were hastily tossed to the deck of a waiting tow-boat moored at the end of the pier. After them went the men, scrambling over the string-piece and down a narrow ladder, those that were able to go alone being first, while the others were assisted by the agent's runners to the accompaniment of oaths and blows. Mr. Upther brought up the rear, and from the deck waved a farewell to his assistants as the tug sheered off and headed seaward just as the sky above Oakland, across the bay, was becoming ruddy with the approaching dawn.

The shipping master climbed to the pilot house, where he passed the time of day with the tug captain and surveyed with evident satisfaction the fruits of his night's labor sprawled about on their bags on the deck beneath him.

"You'll find the *Ringleader* over back o' Goat Island," he

remarked, "I promised her Cap I'd have 'em aboard by daylight and I'm generally a man of my word. Guess he'll have a fair wind to take him to sea," as he looked towards the northern horizon.

The captain grunted a reply and for a time silence fell on the little craft, while the light of a new day suffused itself over the harbor, the surrounding hills and the shipping, chasing the darkness out on to the broad Pacific beyond the Golden Gate.

The anchorage is soon in sight, the lofty spars of the vessels, the tapering yards and the delicate tracery of lifts and braces outlined against the fast-brightening sky, and the shipping master, a binocular to his eyes, is peering through the half light ahead to pick up the *Ringleader*. So intent is he on his occupation that he has failed to observe the two men who, soon after the tug left the pier, had climbed the narrow iron ladder leading from the fire-room and have now mounted to the pilot house and stand at the door thereof.

They enter the doorway just as Upther lowers the glasses and remarks to the tug captain: "That looks like her, right enough. Over back o' that four-master there."

He turned quickly when he heard the footsteps and a look of blank amazement overspread his face when he recognized in the intruders a rival shipping agent and one of his runners.

"What in 'ell 're you doin' here?" he asked shortly.

"Oh, only out for a little taste o' sea air before breakfast. It aids the appetite. And the Cap here was good enough to offer to put us aboard the *Vigilant* on his way down. We've got a little business with her cap'n."

"But we're goin' out to the *Ringleader*, not to the *Vigilant*."

The tow-boat captain here spoke up:

"I didn't suppose as you would mind if I dropped these here friends o' mine aboard the *Vigilant* on our way down, seein' as they was on urgent business and we have to pass close alongside o' her."

He did not think it necessary to mention what this little act of courtesy was worth to him in coin of the realm.

So Dutch Jake relapsed into silence again and nothing more was said until the tug captain rang two bells to go astern as his boat scraped alongside of the *Vigilant*, and he yelled to her deck for someone to lower a ladder. As it came dangling down the side, the shipping agent and his runner, followed

closely by Mr. Upther, descended to the deck of the tug and stood waiting for it to reach them. As soon as it is made fast above them the boarding master's runner, instead of mounting it, steps forward and hails the men there with a "Come now, get on to your feet and up with you. Lively, there."

The words are not out of his mouth before Dutch Jake springs after him, but is brought up sharply by a heavy hand on his shoulder and as he spins quickly around to see whose it is, he finds a revolver stuck under his nose, with the resolute face of the shipping master behind it.

"What the devil's the meaning of this?" shouted Upther.

"Only that I've shipped these men here and am going to put 'em aboard the *Vigilant*."

The first of the men is already on the deck of the ship and has sent down a bight of rope with which to haul up the dunnage bags, while the balance of the crew are making their way laboriously up the ship's side. As the last one drops over the rail, the boarding master nods to the man he has been covering so carefully all the while, with an "Up with you, now."

For answer Upther rips out an oath, but before his hand can go to his hip pocket, a bullet whistles by his head to be lost in the waters of the bay while his cheek is burned with the powder grains. There was nothing for it but to obey, so up he goes, followed by his oppressor, and as they disappear over the rail, the tug swings clear and heads out into the stream.

"Here's your crew, Captain Bradshaw. Sixteen all told and sober," said the agent. "Will you have Mr. Dunning check them off as I call the roll?" His assistant meanwhile had been hurriedly lining the men up under the break of the poop. They were a motley crowd, with their canvas bags set behind them against the spare yard carried on deck, and as the boarding master turned to them and, reading from a paper in his hand, began, "Charles Swenson, Oscar Johnson, Manuel Llaguno," and so on down the list, the answering "Here" came in many a different accent and tongue. And when the answer was slow in coming or came in thick tones, the agent's runner was at hand to shove the muddled owner of the name to one side.

When the last name on the list is reached the agent, with

no sign of hesitancy in his voice, calls out "Jacob Upther." There is no answer, though a light of comprehension spreads over the face of that worthy, and almost instantly the boarding master has him covered again with his revolver, saying: "Get over there, you. Why don't you answer?" Then, to the captain, though with eyes still on Jake: "There they are, sir. Now, if you'll sign the receipt and give me the order on your agents for the two hundred dollars. I won't detain you."

While this is being done, Mr. Dunning and the second mate are going through the clothes of the men for guns. Upther's is the only one found and, after a sharp struggle, is confiscated and passed up to the captain for safe keeping. Then, pocketing his receipts, the shipping master and his assistant drop into a small boat made fast on the other side of the vessel from that on which the tow-boat had approached and which had thus escaped the watchful eyes of Dutch Jake. As the boat is shot clear of the ship with a vigorous shove of the oars, Upther springs to the pin-rail and hurls a string of his choicest epithets after his retreating enemies. He is promptly dragged back by the two mates and ordered forward to man the capstan bars, where the rest of the crew have already preceded him, after having dumped their bags in the dirty fore-castle.

But instead, he jerks himself free, leaps to the quarterdeck, thence to the top of the afterhouse, where Captain Bradshaw is keenly watching the proceedings, and addresses the skipper, his face livid with rage:

"What's the meaning of this, Cap'n Bradshaw? I want to know. This isn't your crew and I never shipped here."

The captain surveyed him coolly from head to foot and let his eyes travel upwards again until they rested full on the face of the angry man. Then, with no sign of recognition, "Who the devil are you? And let me tell you the first thing you'll do'll be to get off this deck a heap sight quicker'n you came here, and go for'ard where you b'long." There was menace in the captain's eye, and Upther backed sullenly off the house, stopping by the booby-hatch on the quarterdeck, where he repeated his query.

"What do I know about it," answered Captain Bradshaw. "You were put aboard this vessel by a reputable shipping agent as one of my crew. I've paid a month's advance for

you same's for the rest of the men; your name's on my papers and to Antwerp you'll sail this ship."

"I never signed your papers. Why, you know me, Cap'n Bradshaw. I'm Jacob Upther, a boarding master, and this here crew b'longs to the *Ringleader*, lyin' just ahead of you. Signed 'em all a week ago and have given each man a month's advance out o' my own pocket. What'd I be doin' shippin' afore the mast with a lot of crazy galoots. If my name's on your papers, it's a forgery and you'd be afraid to take it to law. Guess there must be some mistake here and I insist on bein' put aboard the tug again with my crew."

"I don't know anythin' about that. I transacted my business through a reliable man and this is the crew he put aboard," said the captain shortly, motioning to Mr. Dunning to get the man forward.

As the mate approached with the order on his lips, Upther spun quickly about on his heel and his fist shot out with sledge-hammer force. But the mate was wary and had stepped quickly aside while a heavy belaying pin crashed down on the outstretched arm with such force as to make it drop helplessly to the side, and the two mates hustled the resisting man forward.

Soon the click of the iron pawl dropping into place drifts aft, then the words of "Down the Bay of Mexico" rise in loud, crude tones, followed by "Walk Her Round" and "West Australia," to the rhythm of which the shuffling feet keep time. The iron cable comes slowly in, a link at a time, grating harshly on the hawsepipe, the matè now leaning out on the bumpkin to watch it, now admonishing the men to "walk her round briskly." Suddenly he straightens up, raises a hand to the men to cease heaving and shouts aft: "Up and down, sir!"

"Break her out, Mr. Dunning," answers the captain, and the bodies bend lower over the bars and muscles swell as the strain on the capstan increases. The songs have ceased and in their places are heard, here and there, the muttered words "Heave and raise the dead," "Dig your nails in, now," "Break her out." Slowly the anchor leaves its bed at the bottom of the bay and when it is at last clear and the strain on the cable is eased, the men break into a run and soon have it, dripping and muddy, hanging at the fore-foot.

The tug, which all this time has been hanging in the stream

hard by, now ranges nearer. A coil of light line is sent spinning over the water to her, and as it falls across her stern is hauled rapidly aboard, followed by the heavy, dripping manilla hawser which is being paid out through the forward chocks of the *Vigilant*. Then, with wheel hard over and the hawser tautening until the bitts crack, she heads for the distant sea, the huge ship following helplessly after her as the blind follow a dog.

The wind being fair, the gaskets are soon off the topsails and the sails sheeted home. The upper topsails are mast-headed to the tunes of "Johnny Bowker" and "My Tom's Gone to Hilo," the ex-boarding master being driven from one halyard to another, where he "tailed out" with the crew as well as his aching arm would allow. As they pass Fort Point, with its light, Upther climbs to the rail once more and measures with his eye the distance to the shore. But the ship is well out in the channel and he does not dare risk a swim; the tide making strong ebb as it is. So he turns inboard again, as does a hunted animal whose chances of escape are one by one cut down, and is met by the mate's order, "Get the gaskets off the main t'gallants'l. You there! Why don't you jump when you're spoke to. Aloft with you, now."

There was no help for it, so up he goes with his one good arm, and is still aloft when the tug casts off the hawser, swings about, and with a farewell blast of her whistle, heads back to the city without coming alongside again.

But there is still one more chance when the pilot leaves. The station boat is abeam just as the last of the topgallant-sails is set, and as the yawl-boat puts out from her side and comes breasting over the seas toward the ship, an urgent job in the chain lockers, with a watchful second mate bending over him requires Jake's attention. When he reaches daylight again that last chance has gone.

The staysails are already set, the courses are hauled down as the pilot leaves, then follow royals and skysails, one after another. The ship is now sliding smoothly over the long Pacific swells, heeling more and more in the fresh breeze as each additional sail is piled on to the white cloud above her, until the lee channels are rippling noisily through the blue water. The moist, sweet smell of the sea comes down on the north wind, the eastern hills are being dropped rapidly astern as the *Vigilant* lifts over the long rollers, with a mass of foam

under her figurehead, a long, white furrow astern pointing back to the last bit of land that will be seen for many a day, and before her the illimitable sea.

We will draw a veil over Upther's first week on the ship. It would not make pleasant reading and it is sufficient to say that, almost before the Farallones were dropped, a full measure of punishment was exacted from his person for the filching of Captain Bradshaw's crew. At the end of that period he had retrograded into a dutiful, submissive foremast hand; jumping when he was spoken to and with a wholesome respect for the mates. And yet this metamorphosis was not brought about without a hard struggle, for the ex-boarding master was game. When the mate first jumped him for some trivial matter, soon after the pilot had left, Upther was ready for him, in spite of his helpless arm, and clinched with the officer, the two rolling over and over on the deck until the second mate came to Mr. Dunning's assistance. At the close of this little affair, Jake was carried to his bunk in the fore-castle. After that the mates lost no opportunity to impress upon the offender what he was up against, while the skipper looked on from the quarterdeck with grim satisfaction.

Captain Bradshaw's only cross was that he had to stand idly by and see this chastening effected by proxy. For many a time his fist itched to be at the work which the etiquette of the ship forbade him to take a hand in. But, at the end of a week, with a badly disfigured countenance, Upther knuckled under and accepted the situation as philosophically as possible, seeing what the fall meant to him. And from that time on he proved himself a good sailorman, taking kindly to the bone soup and salt horse, and, on account of his masterful ways keeping his place in the fore-castle, which, considering his former occupation, was no easy thing to do.

In due time, at the end of some one hundred and thirty days namely, the *Vigilant* arrived off Flushing, and, with the aid of a tow-boat proceeded up the winding Scheldt to Antwerp. Here, fearing his man would escape and his crime not yet expiated nor his indenture worked out, Captain Bradshaw turned him over to the American Consul for safe keeping, and he in turn handed him over to the police, where he was lodged in jail at his own expense, until the ship was ready for sea again.

In ballast the *Vigilant* made a three weeks' run of it across

the Western Ocean, during which Jake received his finishing touches, and drove into New York on the forerunner of a northeaster at the beginning of the winter.

Two days later the crew gathered before the shipping commissioner to be paid off—together for the last time, these waifs of the sea. When Upther's name was called and he stepped to the desk to receive the wage of his six long months of toil, his account read: "For six months and five days' service at \$18 per month, \$111. Deduct for clothes, boots, etc., from slop-chest, \$64.50; for one month's advance in San Francisco, \$18.00; for four weeks' board to American Consul at Antwerp, \$22.00. Balance due and payable, \$6.50."

And along the water front in San Francisco they tell to this day the tale of Dutch Jake's madness, and how he gave up a lucrative business to go to sea again when the old longing for the smell of the salt, the creak of the yards, and the lift of a heaving deck beneath his feet was on him. But there is a certain sailor's shipping master who lives in constant dread of the day when Jake, tiring of the sea, shall sail in through the Golden Gate again.





BACHELOR of Göttingen: The Story of a Test, by Augustin De La Croix. Translated from the French by H. M. H. Walker*



THE setting sun was gilding with its last rays the painted spire of the principal church of Göttingen, when Doctor Fonarius, after having dismissed the crowd of his disciples, returned within his Cabinet. An iron stove, placed in the middle, kept up in the chamber a soft heat, for it was the month of December, and the sedentary life of the good doctor had rendered him very sensitive to the cold. A thick bed of snow covered the streets, which commenced to become deserted, and the north wind whistled with force on the glass windows of the Gothic houses. The habitation of Doctor Fonarius was situated at the extremity of a Faubourg and completely isolated from the neighboring houses. The high wall which surrounded it served to enclose a little garden shaded in summer by green trees; its windows, besides being constantly shut, protected from the vulgar gaze the interior of the dwelling of the sage, and the door opened but rarely for a chosen few. This mysterious existence, joined to the extreme austerity of his habits, had not less contributed than the diversity and true depths of his knowledge to extend afar the reputation of the savant Fonarius. And they said especially of him that he was versed in the occult sciences and initiated in all the secrets of the Cabala.

Scarcely, this day, had he installed himself, with a sigh of relief, in his great leathern chair, and opened upon his knees his favorite book, when a light knock came upon the door of his Cabinet.

*Translated for Short Stories.

"Come in," said Fonarius, visibly annoyed. "Ah! it is you, Frank," lowering his voice at once to a sweet tone, at the sight of a young man who timidly advanced. "Sit down there first and warm your numbed hands. You may tell me afterwards the object of your visit," Speaking thus, Fonarius indicated to the stranger a seat near his arm chair.

The young man, after relieving himself of his hat and cloak, white with snow, seated himself with an embarrassed air in the place designated, Fonarius, at the same time, fixing upon him a scrutinizing look tempered with kindness.

He was quite a young man, in whom the candid physiognomy, framed in the flowing locks of his blond hair, was relieved by a high forehead where rested intelligence. His eyes, habitually pensive, lit up at times by ardent thought. Fonarius liked him above all his disciples on account of his marvelous aptitude and zeal for study.

"Master," said he suddenly, raising toward the doctor a look ill assured, "your lesson of to-day has been to me of lively interest. Your very wise researches upon the effect and causes argued a superior and subtle mind from which nothing escapes, that knows equally well how to ascend to the principles hid in all things and distinguish the invisible line which links the one to the other."

"My son," interrupted Fonarius, with modest gravity, "there are without doubt at the bottom of these investigations of the philosopher a powerful allurements and a noble aim of a noble ambition. Yes, I believe that there exists under the superficial covering of everything a particle of eternal truth, and a detached ray of supreme science. But they are infinitely rare—those to whom it has been given to collect and combine them. God preserve me, as regards myself, from the insane pride of believing myself one of these fortunate minds!"

"Oh, Master!" exclaimed Frank with enthusiasm, "you have said it. Truth is a noble aim; to search, this is the beginning; to know, is the end! and I also burn to know; dear Master," added he, dropping his voice suddenly to a confidential tone, "let me open my heart to you."

"Speak, my friend," said Fonarius, impressively, "speak in all confidence."

"I acknowledge to you," replied Frank, with hesitation, "all the advantages that I owe to your profound studies, but

the most admirable, the most precious to my eyes, is to be able to predict and explain the future."

"It is true, my son, that I sometimes have success in reading the book of destiny; but, believe me, ignorance is often better than knowledge; there are terrible drawbacks to the gratification of that rash desire."

"What, then, will be these drawbacks? My father, since you deign to authorize me to give you that appellation, I accept them, and if you will initiate me in the mysteries of necromancy, revealing to me the diverse chances that fate reserves for me, believe in my gratitude."

At these words Fonarius turned his two piercing little eyes upon Frank, who was unable to keep from blushing, and an imperceptible smile passed over the lips of the doctor.

"I would have wished you to have renounced the project," replied he; "but, since I cannot succeed, I must forewarn you that my science acts only upon events, and upon facts, and not upon the sentiments and thoughts. Thus, necromancy tells me that you will arrive by my care to a high fortune, but whether, after arriving there, you will remember poor Fonarius, that I cannot foresee."

"Oh! my good, my excellent Master!" cried Frank; "can you believe that I will ever forget the service that you will have rendered me?"

"Then let us proceed, since you wish it," replied Fonarius. "I consent, but it grows late. Our operations and our researches have prolonged themselves far into the night, and on no account can I consent to have you exposed to the dangers of returning alone to your home in the middle of the night at this season of the year. Accept the hospitality which I freely offer you. To-morrow morning you shall be free to resume your daily occupation."

"I accept willingly, dear Master, your kind proposition. If you will permit me I will await the day here in this chamber."

"Not so, if you please; you are young, you have need of repose; a whole night entirely without sleep agrees neither with your age nor organization. With me, who am habituated to it, it affects neither my régime nor my health. With your permission, it is in my bedroom that you finish the night, whilst I await here the return of day."

Without giving his guest time to reply, Fonarius pulled the

cord of a bell which was answered by his old housekeeper. "Martha," said the doctor, "make a good fire within my bed-chamber and put some clean linen on my bed. Frank will take my place there for the night. But go first and find in the cupboard, of which here is the key, one of those long-neck bottles, sealed with red, on the second shelf."

After Martha had brought that for which he had asked, the doctor said, "Now leave us and go make ready that for which you were called."

"This," continued he, presenting a glass to Frank, and removing the cork from the bottle, "will keep our minds awake and fortify our stomachs against fatigue. I drink to your success, my dear neophyte, and wish for your *début* in the career of honor; you shall soon obtain the doctor's cap, the object of your ambition."

They touched glasses. Frank, in order to do justice to the wine of Fonarius, as well as to his cordial hospitality, swallowed in a single draught the golden liquid that had been poured out for him.

At this moment a violent knocking at the door of the Cabinet made Frank start.

"What is it now?" said Fonarius, in an angry tone. "Has Martha forgotten the instructions that I gave her? What can any one want of me at this hour?"

An old man, whom Frank at once recognized as a confidential servant of his uncle, entered abruptly. "Master Frank," said he, all out of breath, "hasten to return to the house; your uncle is dying."

"What can be the matter?" said Frank.

"Alas! Master Frank, the gout from which he has suffered so cruelly for several days has ascended, they say, to his stomach, and his doctor says he has but a few hours to live."

"So noble a man, so good a relative!" murmured Fonarius, much affected. "I regret most sincerely, my dear Frank, the interruption to our conversation, but go; you have not a moment to lose."

"Go, then," said Frank, turning toward the messenger, "I will follow you soon."

Then, becoming serene and regarding Fonarius bashfully: "I see how it is," said he; "it is one of those panics to which the health of my uncle, a little injured by excesses, has accustomed us. The attack may have been more violent this time;

but there is no serious danger. Let us continue, I pray you, our conversation; for I am impatient for knowledge."

Fonarius, more and more surprised, was again about to commence, when a second messenger entered seeking him and bewailing:

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* What misfortune! My good Master, my excellent Master!"

"Well?" demanded Frank quickly.

"He is dead."

"Dead, did you say! are you sure of this?"

"Alas! my Master, he died in my arms, after asking vainly for you several times."

"My uncle! My dear uncle!" cried Frank, hiding his face in his hands, "could I but see thee once more! Let us hasten."

"Stop, my friend," said Fonarius, "suffering misleads you. After having neglected to assist at the last moments of a cherished relative and of whose heritage you are assured, have you no fear that this tardy emotion will not be attributed to the base suggestion of a personal interest?"

"What! do you wish, Fonarius, that I abandon my uncle's house to the rapacity of hired people and to the pillage of strangers? Who then, if it is not I, will take charge and render the funeral honors to him who was my second father? No, no! Do not try to keep me; nothing known will prevent me from accomplishing a sacred duty."

"Go, then," replied Fonarius, "and may heaven protect such a worthy son!"

Several days after, Frank, dressed in deep mourning, entered the Cabinet of Fonarius. "My uncle," said he to the doctor, "has constituted me his only legatee. I am rich, but I do not wish to deprive myself of the lessons which you have promised me nor the advice of your experience. I have conceived vast projects of which I will make you share; meanwhile follow me, if you are truly attached to me. Let us leave here, abandon this house and renounce your position. We will live together and my fortune shall be at your disposal."

"It will doubtless cost me something to alter my habits, and I am too old to begin a new kind of life, but no matter, it shall not be said that Fonarius has refused anything to his friend Frank. I am going to arrange immediately for the sale of my house."

"I will buy it from you, my worthy Fonarius, and from this

moment, if you please, you may regard me as your debtor for the sum of 25,000 florins."

"Be it so, it is agreed; with that I shall be enabled by means of a small income to recompense the long and faithful service of my old housekeeper."

"As you please."

Fonarius followed his pupil. Soon, thanks to his instructions and also to the reputation which he enjoyed among the influential members of the council, Frank obtained, after a public examination, a diploma of Doctor. This title, which made him equal to his Master, for the rank if not for the merit, altered but little, in truth, the marks of deference and respect which he had been pleased formerly to accord to him. But Fonarius, who attached importance only to the reality of the feelings, perceived little of that change.

Frank was rich enough to live without public employment, but his ambition had increased with his fortune. The death of his uncle having left vacant a professorship in one of the Faculties of Göttingen, Frank coveted this second heritage, and after an interim of a year, during which period it was confided to a poor savant in order to give Frank time to assume at least the appearance of a man, Fonarius succeeded, by invoking the memory of his uncle, in having the nephew named as his successor. The desire to distinguish himself stimulated the natural taste of Frank for work. Fonarius served him at the same time as guide in his studies and as a living *repertoire* of human knowledge. His merit shone the more that it was not expected of one of his age. His lessons were attended by a numerous and choice audience. His name commenced to attract attention in the world of letters.

Meanwhile Fonarius passed by rapid transition from the rôle of master to that of emulator and friend, then finally from the last to privy counselor. Frank, in the intoxication of his success, remembered little of his old Master except to utilize to his own profit his knowledge and his credit. The preoccupation of science and ambition had swept from his remembrance the 25,000 florins promised in exchange for the house of Fonarius, and for which the honest doctor had no other guarantee than the word of the purchaser. One day, however, Fonarius ventured, after many struggles with himself, to present this subject in a humble petition to the new doctor.

"Master Frank," said he timidly (for Fonarius had for a long time contracted the habit of affixing this respectful appellation to the name of his old pupil), "it is five years to-day since I have had the honor of aiding you with my counsel, and I can render to myself the testimony that it has not been entirely useless."

"Is that to say that I have failed in what I owe to you?" replied Frank with dignity.

"I do not say that precisely, Master."

"Are you not treated here as my equal?"

"I feel, as I ought, the honor of my position."

"Of what, then, finally do you complain? And why recall the date and importance of services that you have rendered me?"

"It is, Master, that it is precisely five years since I left my little home."

"And what does that imply?"

"It is that," added Fonarius with embarrassment, "it is, that poor Martha yet awaits the first quarter of the pension that I ought to pay her upon the 25,000 florins that you have promised me."

"Do you believe me capable of breaking my word? Is it only from personal interest that you have determined to follow me? It is a good time, truly, to think of such a trifle, when I, myself, am occupied for your future, and our common fortune! Listen to me, Fonarius! There is at this moment a vacant chair at Vienna; it is an important post and it can place an able man in a very high position. You stand well with the member on whom this position depends. Ask for me this favor; it will be granted on your recommendation, I am sure of it. Then let us go together and I shall be able at last to reward you wholly."

The reputation of Frank had already reached the capital of Austria. He did not have to wait for his nomination to the Chair which he had solicited. As soon as it was announced to him he departed for Vienna in company with Fonarius. The knowledge which he showed in his elevated sphere of the professorship, gave a new degree of celebrity to his merit, and in a little while all Germany cited with admiration the eminent knowledge and eloquence of Doctor Frank.

His fortune grew with his renown. He was named successively to several remunerative sinecures which in some degree testified to the particular esteem of the government.

Finally, the Dean to the Council University was relieved on account of his great age, and Frank was named to take his place.

Fonarius thinking then that the ambition of his old pupil ought to be satisfied, and that his advice would become to him, henceforth, useless, thought most seriously of taking leave of Frank in his new dignity; for long since he had lamented in secret the growing indifference, and more and more his haughty manners, in return for his regard.

"Master," stammered Fonarius, trembling with emotion and perhaps with regret, "you are rich and covered with honors. For myself, I am growing old, my devotion will serve you nothing; it is time I thought of retiring."

"I will not permit it, assuredly. For nothing in the world will I consent to deprive myself of your experience and of your services, honest Fonarius."

"But, Master, I cannot at my age rest in this precarious condition."

"Ingrate! dare you call precarious the independent and honorable position you occupy in my house?"

"If only," added Fonarius, with a supplicating air, "you would condescend to remember the 25,000 florins."

"What then? Will it be that I can never find in you but an implacable creditor, and you believe me an insolvent debtor? I will take care to-day to restore to your hands a sum that will confirm you in the foolish thought of separating from me."

"But, Master," replied Fonarius, the tears in his eyes, "you will not refuse me, at least for old Martha?"

"That woman again! In truth, it is a strange thing, the obstinacy of some persons in mixing useless things to the prejudice of the most important, and in wishing to constrain persons in high rank to divide their preoccupations with these paltry affairs. I am sorry, my brave Fonarius, to see that you render me so little justice. Yet a little patience, yet an effort, and I reach my aim, and I mount the last round of the ladder of fame! Do you hear that, my venerable sage?"

"The Prime Minister," added he, lowering his voice, "is well used up by age and fatigue; he has esteem for you, doctor; it is necessary to counsel him to rest. He has taken me into his affections. The Emperor, they say, sets some value on my talents. Let us each be active in our own

way in order to influence him, when the moment shall have come, to make a plea in my favor before his Majesty."

That very day Fonarius made frequent visits to his illustrious friend, who loved his simple and honest character as much as he esteemed his prodigious knowledge. The Minister often consulted him upon his private affairs as well as upon the questions of public interest, and Fonarius, serving at the same time the ambition of Frank and the health of the Minister, determined at last to induce the Emperor to agree to his dismissal and the nomination of his protégé.

The last vow of Frank was finally accomplished. Fortune had conducted him by the hand to the highest seat of honor. He bid adieu forever to the professorate and quitted his country home in order to live in the most magnificent palace in Vienna. The crowd of courtiers, solicitors and personages of all ranks who crowded the antechambers during the first days of his installation rendered futile the efforts of Fonarius to reach the presence of the new Minister. Finally the porter opened to his incessant supplications, and it was with respectful fear that the good doctor mounted the rich staircase of the palace, the grandeur of which he himself had made possible for Frank.

At the moment when the Hussar of service announced before the Minister the presence of Doctor Fonarius, his Excellency made sign to two secretaries who were writing under his dictation to retire.

"Ah, Monseigneur!" cried Fonarius, after they had retired, "have pity on your old professor, may I not say your friend?"

"What do you wish of me?" frigidly demanded the Minister.

"That you give me hospitality. Since you have left me alone in your late house it has been sold by your orders, and I find myself absolutely without shelter and without resources."

"Your exigencies have fatigued my generosity, Master Fonarius; my bounty has alone encouraged the new folly of which you are culpable at this moment. I believed at least that you would be able to comprehend the duties the high functions with which I am invested exact of me, and the distance that they have put forever between you and me."

"Heaven preserve me from failing in the respect that I owe your dignity, but, as your Excellency will deign to observe, I am a stranger in this city."

"And who is thinking of detaining you?"

Fonarius, at this cruel observation, essayed to hide a tear which fell between the deep wrinkles of his cheeks, losing itself in the gray clusters of his long beard. "Monseigneur," replied he, falling on his knees to the Minister, "I have left all in order to follow you. I have renounced, upon your demand, my place of professorship and the occupations which were my sole resource and pleasure. There remains to-day not even enough to return to Göttingen. My only hope is in you."

"Am I then your banker?"

"Nevertheless, Monseigneur, the 25,000 florins for which you have given me your word."

"Insolent! If I had the weakness to make that promise to a miserable necromancer, have you flattered yourself that the Minister ratifies the engagements extracted from the inexperience of youth? Depart, unhappy one, and return to your house and to your diabolical occupation."

"Monseigneur, pity for my age! It is late, the night is dark, the snow covers the roads!"

"Begone, I tell you, or I shall call my people."

"It is useless," replied Fonarius, rising fiercely and looking at the Minister with his two little piercing eyes; "since your Excellency refuses me a shelter in your palace of Vienna, I shall manage, I see, to remain henceforth in my little house at Göttingen." On completing these words, Fonarius seized the cord of a bell; Frank looked around him confused and soon realized that he was still in the same place in the Cabinet of Doctor Fonarius.

"Martha!" cried the doctor to the old housekeeper who entered, "reconduct Master Frank to the door of the street; I am not fool enough to give up my chamber and bed to a simple Bachelor of Göttingen."





Y the Waters of Sparta: **A Grecian Love Story, by E. F.** **Benson***



YOUR letter has just come. Anastasi brought it to me as I was having breakfast, and he looked at it as one looks at some native product from a far-off conjectured country. I gave him the stamps, and they filled him with a tremulous joy. But as you do not know who Anastasi is, if I am to answer your letter, I must begin from the beginning.

You ask me why I linger in "this bankrupt country among an abandoned populace, who drink resinated wine." You tell me that the golden days are upon London; that the little green chairs in the park are full, that Sarah Bernhardt's voice is a more mellow miracle than ever, that you went to Rigoletto last night, and are going to Faust to-morrow, that Piccadilly is gray and shady, and sweet with the smell of flower-stalls and asphalt, and that a blue mist hangs in Pall Mall, like the bloom on a plum. Yet I sit here, and I am not, like Ruth, sick for home. I will tell you why.

The stylograph pen with which I write to you is my only link with what you insolently call civilization. My English clothes are all outworn, and I wear a barbarous garb; my hands and face are dyed tawny brown with those inimitable cosmetics, sun and air. I am sitting on the edge of the river-bed of the Eurotas at the corner of a grove of cypresses, tall and solemn like serge-clad Romish priests, and encrusted with rough fruit. This has once been the garden round some Turkish house, for in the middle stands a pile of ruins weathered and worn. Remembering Browning's "Home thoughts from abroad," I went and tapped, not with a hoe, but with the end of my stick, on the moldering plaster of a cornice, and sure

*From Temple Bar.

enough, with divine fitness, there dropped out a scorpion with "wide angry nippers."

But the garden has long been allowed to run wild, and what is lovelier than a garden run wild? Several olive trees have grown up among the cypresses, and wild vines, already covered with little hard green globes, loop and twine themselves among their branches. Here, again, there is a pomegranate—have you any idea of a pomegranate except as a wrinkled, knobby lump bought on the quay at Marseilles?—with thick red flowers looking as if they were made of wax. On it, too, the fruit is forming, and little green burnished pitchers are beginning to take the place of the flowers.

I sit at the corner of this wild garden, which Nature has again taken to herself. Above me there is a sky of incredible blue, in front the stream bed of the Eurotas, a boisterous blue stream with deep holes to swim in, and across that the olive-covered plain, rising gently to the hills beyond, covered with vegetation on their lower slopes, but bare above, showing the good red earth, and cast in fantastic forms. They remind me exactly of a scene in a Bible picture book which I used to be shown on Sunday afternoon; in the foreground the good Samaritan, with a headgear resembling an over-ripe pumpkin, was ministering to the man who fell among thieves, and in the background was a row of hills exactly like these.

Just in front of my feet there races by a mill-stream which joins the river a hundred yards below at the farm of Anastasi's father. To my right there rises a bed of tall reeds ten feet high, which talk together with dry pattering tongues, and in the reeds the cicadas are winding their watches. I lean against the trunk of a white poplar, and a nightingale sings in the poplar.

Let us move ten yards farther up. Here the mill-stream comes hurrying out of a cool green tunnel of wild fig trees, the lair of a tawny spider who has woven his web across the opening, and hangs malignant and busy on a silk suspension bridge across the middle of the stream. The web oscillates a little backwards and forwards; for out of the darkness a cool draught draws down. Looking up into the moist, green cave, you can see far up a white, uncertain glimmer of foam, where a rock breaks the stream, and lower down little luminous specks of gold from the sunlight which filters through the roof, and at the opening the undersides of the strong, five-fingered fig-leaves are bright from the reflection of the sun off the water.

Now and then a tortoise goes paddling down at the bottom of the stream, and grave, priest-like frogs sit on the edge in readiness to plunge in at your approach.

All down its course delicate clumps of black-stemmed maiden-hair line the banks; the tips of their leaves drag and dabble in the stream, and tremble as the water touches them. Fresh, juicy elders, with white parasol-like flowers, grow thick on the banks, and here and there the more sober green of myrtle leaves pushes up among them. Over the water float blue-winged dragon flies, and just now a swallow-tail butterfly settled for a moment on a great yellow thistle close to me. A couple of goats, one white, one black, strayed, no doubt, from the farm below, crop quickly and anxiously at some young shoots of hawthorn, like people taking a hurried meal before going to catch their train.

A hundred yards below stand the gray roofs of the farm. It has once been a mill, and a wall of masonry still conducts the mill-stream down a wooden cylinder to the mill-house. There it empties itself and spreads at will over the broad river-bed, never, I think, joining the river, but flushing an acre of ground with a more vivid vegetation. First it waters all those clumps of pink oleanders which grow, not as they grow in your well-beloved green tubs in front of French cafés, with desolate stalks and a few starved leaves and flowers at the extreme tips, but in bushes which are one mass of pink blossom. Then, turning to the left, it gives drink to that row of poplars and eucalyptus trees, and further on to more oleanders and a meadow of wild spiræa, which is just beginning to foam into flower. Finally it attends to those great yellow thistles mixed with spurge, and there I think it comes to an end, for beyond lies a band of dry shingle, unflushed and barren. I found among the spurge yesterday the caterpillar of a spurge hawk-moth, already full-grown, and meditating its chrysalis change. Horned, red-legged, and spotted with yellow, it disdained concealment as it sat on the dull red stalks of the plant. "Soon," it thought, "I shall be safe enough."

The ford across the Eurotas lies just in front of me, and an hour ago a delightful little drama was acted there. A very small boy on a very large donkey wished to cross, and drive over another donkey. The means by which he hoped to effect this were recondite oaths and a large piece of wood like a cricket bat, and reaching forward on his donkey he would

smite the other one with it. All went well till the three reached mid-stream, but there the other donkey wandered off the ford into the water, about three feet deep, where it stood contentedly, for the day was hot. The boy did not wish to follow it there, but in an ill-considered moment he thought he could still smite it from the shallow water of the ford. But he misjudged his distance, the blow fell innocuous, and the cricket bat flew out of his hand and floated down-stream, and he had to drive the donkey with strange oaths alone. When it had cooled itself they proved effectual.

Yesterday I spent at Mistra, a deserted Turkish town lying on one of the lower ridges of Taygetus, and commanding the plain. The little street runs steeply up between empty houses till it reaches the church, where a few nuns live in the precincts. One was spinning, another feeding her goat with a branch of acacia, a third drew me water from the well in a bucket of olive wood. The church itself has a terrace looking out over the plain, and there, framed between Byzantine columns, I sat and looked at the fairest view I had ever seen.

A light north wind was blowing, and the olive trees were now green and now gray, and through them, here and there, marched grave lines of cypresses. Sparta, clustering on a little hill some four miles away, gleamed white against the plain beyond, and far off on the other side of the valley rose my Bible-picture hills. To the right, and a little behind, Taygetus climbed and met the sky in snow. Pomegranates grew in the courtyard below, and somewhere up on the hills a shepherd was singing, perhaps not very sweetly, but very pleasantly. Then when the sun sank, and the shadows marched across the plain, a nun came up to the church door and beat with a stone upon an iron hoop. That was the church bell, and one nun left her spinning, and another tied up the goat, and they went in and said their vespers together.

After dinner last night we had a great excitement. An itinerant company of players had appeared while I was at Mistra, and with the consent of the Mayor had erected a rough, wooden stage outside the café, and were to give a performance. The place was in a ferment, and the excitement rose to fever heat when the curtain drew up and disclosed a ferocious brigand sitting in his cave with several prisoners by him. To these he made a long speech, and the prisoners begged for mercy in moving terms. But the brigand was firm, and hav-

ing taken all their valuables away, he proceeded to bare a brawny right arm and draw his sword in order to execute them. At this painful crisis in their lives a young lady in pink tights and wearing a helmet and sword, whom I confidently believe to have represented a colonel in the Greek army, rushed on the stage, and after a terrific conflict with the brigand, in which she overturned no less than one real table and two real chairs, slew him, planted her foot on his chest, and unfurled the Greek flag. The enthusiasm has scarcely subsided even this morning, and we are going to have the play again to-night.

In these things alone there seems to one as quietly-minded as myself sufficient reason for lingering on, though I miss so many nights of the golden Sarah, and so many days of gray Piccadilly. But I leave to-morrow for Athens, since the real reason for my stopping here has ceased to exist. And the real reason has been a devouring curiosity about Anastasi's love affairs.

Anastasi and I are old friends: twice he and his mule, a mouse-colored confidential quadruped, have taken me round the Peloponnesus, and my interest in his affairs is of long standing. For has he not stood by me as I ate my lunch on the Langarda pass, and wept salt tears over the obdurate refusals of the young lady's father? I shared his sorrow and I am sharing his joy.

The case was this. Anastasi's father is a wretched, drunken old man who lives from hand to mouth, and when Anastasi fell in love with the mayor's daughter, and was audacious enough to propose to her, contrary to all the laws of Greek etiquette, Sparta generally sided with the mayor when he turned Anastasi out of the house and forbade him to speak to his daughter again. "If he had five thousand francs," said the infuriated dignitary, "I should not let her marry him."

This was of course pure rhetoric, and everybody quite rightly interpreted it to mean that if Anastasi had five thousand francs that mayor would be delighted.

In the beginning it was the mayor's fault. Anastasi's father rented some land from him, and when Anastasi came to pay the rent, the mayor would ask him to have a glass of wine and roll him a cigarette, for Anastasi's deft fingers rolled cigarettes in a way that was regarded as little short of miraculous in Sparta, and they were considered equal to the best

made-up cigarettes straight from Athens. Anastasi's cigarettes were full and dry, whereas the cigarettes which the mayor makes himself—I know it to my cost, for he made me one only this morning—are wet and empty.

So Anastasi sat with the mayor and Theodora, and after the second glass of wine the mayor usually went to sleep, and Anastasi made love to Theodora. He is a handsome, straight-featured boy, and Theodora and he enjoyed themselves very much. But the deluge came when he proposed, and the mayor went back to his wet and empty cigarettes.

I had written to Anastasi before I came here this year, telling him I should want his mule again for a few trips in the neighborhood, and expressing a hope that his suit was prospering. He met me at the bridge over the Eurotas when I arrived, and asked me if he might come and see me that evening. His face was solemn and mysterious, and I waited for developments. I was sitting at the café after dinner that night when I heard a whistle from somewhere in the darkness, which was twice repeated before I looked round. Anastasi, from under the shadow of a pepper tree, was beckoning to me to come, and I obediently paid for my coffee, and went. He walked on ahead of me until we were out of the main street, and then stopped.

"Will you come to my house?" he said, "the old devil"—he alluded to his father—"is out, and I want to show you something."

He would give no further explanations, and we walked on in silence to the mill. He lit a candle, and asked me to sit down while he went to the farther corner of the room, and after some effort took up one of the big flat stones with which it is paved, dived his hand in, and brought out an old shirt, which evidently contained something heavy. He put this on a chair between us, undid it, and disclosed a big brown handkerchief. This again was untied, and showed a Greek black-ware vase, the mouth of which was stuffed with newspaper. He took out the newspaper stopper, and poured onto the brown handkerchief between five hundred and six hundred coins, some silver, some gold.

There were ten gold coins of Philip, and thirty-four of Alexander. There were at least two hundred silver Athenian coins, of the fourth and third centuries, and about a hundred more struck under the Arcadian league of Epaminondas.

There was a gold coin of Tenos, which I think is unique, and a gold coin of Epidaurus, which I am sure is.

Anastasia watched me as I turned them over.

"What shall I do?" he said.

"Marry Theodora."

He laughed, showing his white teeth.

"A fortnight ago," he said, "I was digging a ditch into the vineyard in order to water it from the mill stream. The water had run for ten minutes, and I went back to close it again. As I went, I saw, near the corner where those Americans dug last year and spoiled two vine trees, a little, black, shiny thing sticking out of the earth. So I dammed up the water, and went back to look. And I found this vase. The old devil was drunk that night, so I hid it in the corner of the room and waited for you to come. Shall I get five thousand francs?"

I was not, and I am not, acquainted with the Greek law about treasure-trove, so in my ignorance I advised Anastasi to the best of my ability. I put aside the Tenos coin and the coin from Epidaurus, and certain others which I had not seen before, and from the rest made a selection which were worth about four thousand francs market value. Now there is in Athens an excellent and honorable antiquity dealer who buys slightly under market value, and sells for slightly over, and with him I have had many transactions.

So I gave Anastasi a note to him, and packed him off to Athens next day. He returned yesterday with a receipt from the Ionian Bank for 3,700 francs. The rest of the coins remained in their *cache*.

This morning we paid a visit to the mayor, and the upshot is that Anastasi is betrothed to Theodora.

So my interest is satisfied, and I leave Sparta to-morrow.

I wish you would go to the British Museum for me and inquire about a gold coin of Tenos. It has on the reverse a *quadriga* driven by Niké, and on the obverse a helmeted head. If they have it, I should like to know how much they paid for it; if not, you may tell C—— that I shall bring them one for sale on behalf of a friend in a fortnight's time, and hope to drive a hard bargain; also a unique coin of Epidaurus, both in excellent condition. There will be others as well.

This is why I have stayed at Sparta, and this is partly why I am coming home at once.



Reincarnation of Jehu: The Story of An Opportunity, by M. Imlay Taylor. Illustrations by Edward Mayer*

HE was only about ten years old, and he was black, with abundant curly wool that stood up in aggressive tufts. His face was so black that by contrast the whites of the eyes and the gleaming white teeth dazzled the observer.

It was a balmy spring morning and he hung on the front gate whistling almost as sweetly as a robin; his pink striped calico shirt was soiled and ragged, giving striking glimpses of the black skin beneath, and his trousers were decorated in the rear with two conspicuous patches of different colors, while his black legs and his long flat feet—with the ankles exactly in the middle—were innocent of shoes and stockings. A spirited horse passing would arrest his whistling on the instant and he would swing far out to gaze, for he had the deeply rooted devotion to horse-flesh that belongs to the African.

A peddler's cart was coming slowly down the street, the

*Written for Short Stories.

horse following the peddler, who walked before it shouting "Rabbits!—rab—rabbits!—po—tatoes! cabbages—cabba—ges! ap—ap—apples!"

The little darky boy ran out of his gate and surreptitiously gathered an apple from the rear of the slow-moving vehicle. He was cracking it between his white teeth with radiant joy when he heard a voice from the house.

"Yo' Julius Cæsar Langhorne! Yo' come heah d'reckly!"

Julius Cæsar looked longingly at the wagon, and waited to see a high trap swing by drawn by a fine trotter.

"Gee whiz!" he murmured, "wish I hatter hoss like dat sho'!"

"Julius Cæsar Langhorne, yo' come heah d'reckly or I'll gib yo' er lickin'!"

And Julius Cæsar went.

He found his mother—a substantial black woman—nearly ready to go to the funeral of a deacon of the church, which was appointed for that day at two o'clock. She laid violent hands on her offspring.

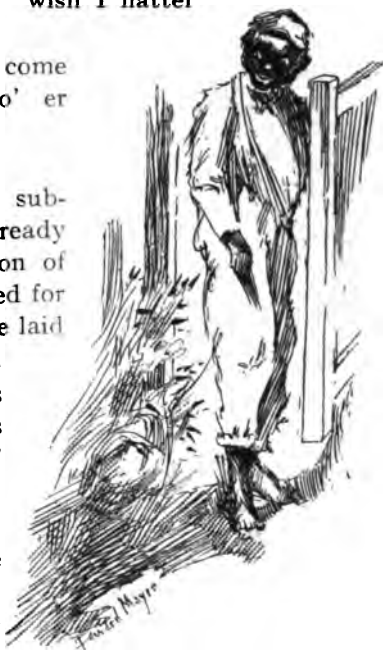
"Yo' come right heah, Julius Cæsar," she said, "yo' is gwineter go ter de fun'ral an' I'se got ter clean yo' up fust.

Her son wailed aloud.

"I'se gwineter help Jim drive de buggy ter-day," he sobbed, "I don' wanten go ter de fun'ral!"

"Yo'se gwine," retorted his parent firmly, beginning to scrub his face and head much as she usually scrubbed the door knob. "Didn't I leave yo' behin' befo', an' didn't I find yo'd et all de watermelon an' de herring, an' put de cat's tail in de butter—an' den gone drivin' de judge's buggy off? An' didn't I hatter lick yo' good? Yo'se gwineter de fun'ral, yo' is!"

Julius Cæsar wept, but experience had taught him that resistance was useless, and the only hope was to snatch victory from defeat.



"Is I gwine in de kerridge ter de boneyard?" he asked with carefully concealed eagerness.

"Yo' is sho'," replied Mrs. Langhorne, pushing him into his best suit of shop clothes, which she buttoned with difficulty, for he was growing.

"Glory hallelujah!" said Julius Cæsar devoutly.

"Yo'se gwineter ride, an' mind yo' behaves," said his mother, as she put a large collar and scarf of vivid purple over her own black alpaca frock and mounted the purple scoop bonnet of "the Society."



"Yo'se ter behave," she continued, "fo' I'se gwineter ride in de kerridge wid Sister Albanah Clarke and Sister Queen Victoria Mack and B'rer Syllabubus Jenkins, an' if I kotches yo' cuttin' up, Julius Cæsar Langhorne, I'll raise yo' hide sho'."

Julius Cæsar offered no remarks, but he rolled his eyes around until only the whites were in view, and he breathed deeply behind a huge purple necktie. Mammy

Langhorne worked herself painfully into her white cotton gloves, and scenting her handkerchief with a good douche of musk, she led forth Julius Cæsar, and the two proceeded to the church, where the funeral carriages were already drawn up in two long lines on either side of Mstreet. The church steps were already crowded with the sisters in black alpaca frocks with large purple collars and the purple bonnets, while the brethren, in their best black suits, lined the sidewalk. They, too, wore the insignia of "the Society": high silk hats, long stoles of

purple and white, and little aprons to match the strings, tied at the waist behind with fluttering butterfly bows. There was a band grouped below the standard—a large purple satin banner lettered and fringed with gold—and one of the members kept up a deeply melancholy bum-bum on the big drum.

Mammy Langhorne bore proudly down on the assemblage, leading her highly polished and neatly attired pickaninny. But Julius Cæsar—though walking meekly at his mother's side—kept his gaze fastened on the horses, looking for good ones; and there was longing in his eyes.

His mother ascended the steps, bowing graciously to the members of her Society.

"Howdy, Sister Clarke, how's yo' feelin' ter-day?"

"Tlank yo', Sister Langhorne, I'se bin right po'ly all



winter," replied Sister Clarke, "but I'se managed ter keep my color."

"How's de misery in yo' side, Sister Jenkins?"

"It's po'erful bad, Sister Langhorne, an' I'se gwineter put some mo' Wizzard ile on it. I'se bin takin' Hood's Sarsparilly an' goose grease, but it ain't done no good."

"Julius Cæsar—yo' stay right heah! I'se sorry to hear yo'se so 'flicted, Sister Jenkins; yo'd better try er li'le bit ob goose grease an' molasses an' brown sugar mixed—dat'll bring yo' round. Dey do say dat it wuz neglectin' er misery dat killed Brer Marmaduke Pinkett."

"No, 'twarnt de misery in his back," replied Sister Clarke mournfully; "he hed de paralysis ob de brain an' vertigo fo' mo' 'en er year befo' he sawed hisself off dat apple tree,"



"How'd he do dat, Sister Clarke?" inquired another sister, wiping the perspiration from the shining black face that was enshrined in her purple bonnet.

"He jest wuz settin' on de bough dat he sawed off," explained the

elder member, fanning herself; "an' he fell on de palin' ob de iron fence; it wouldn't er killed him no ways efhe'd felled on his head, bekase de paralysis ob de brain meks it kinder insensiblèr—de doctor sesso—but de palin' run inter him an' he wuz so po'ly dat he kinder hopped right off'n de perch."

"I heerd dat de fam'ly took on awful," said Mammy Langhorne, gripping Cæsar firmly.

"Dey did so, but den dey couldn't hab expected dat he'd live long wid all de miseries dat he had; an' de fun'ral suttinly do please 'em. I seen Mrs. Pinkett gwine in jest now an' she looked po'erful proud an' high stomached."

"Dere's a sight ob flowers inside an' de S'ciety suttinly is



heah in force; dere's twenty-six kerridges an' er buggy, besides de hearse."

"It do look well," sighed Mrs. Langhorne, "but I wish dèy wouldn't die 'long at once so; dere's bin four deaths dis month, an' dat's two dollars cl'ar out."

"Dat's so, an' jest after de expense ob de new bonnets," admitted Sister Clarke, in a melancholy tone.

"Ladies," said Brother Jenkins, with a low bow, "de sarvices is erbout ter commence, an' yo' will be pleased ter view de corpse an' take yo' seats."

The interior of the church was thick with purple bonnets and musk, and the coffin was well covered with large wreaths of everlastings with appropriate mottoes. There were doves, gates-ajar, anchors, hearts, sheaves of wheat, and a profusion of long purple streamers. The rustle of seating the members subsided, the musk arose and the palm-leaf fans waved; the prayers were long and powerful, and the sermon longer.

But to Julius Cæsar Langhorne the discourse was stale, flat and unprofitable; he writhed in body and rebelled in spirit, and his outgrown trousers made life a misery. He heard quite plainly the occasional stamp of a horse's hoof, the shifting of the carriages, and now and then the whirl of swiftly passing wheels. Mammy Langhorne nodded, but Sister Clarke, who sat on his other side, was vigilant; escape was impossible, and he joined in the closing hymn with all the power of his youthful lungs. He was letting off steam.

Then came the slow departure from the church, the coffin and its bearers first, followed by the long file of aproned brethren and at last the purple bonnets. Julius Cæsar saw little Topsy Thompkins across the aisle and ran his tongue out at her, which caused her to let off a shrill squeal of terror, but the disturbance was immediately suppressed, and the arch offender looked as innocent as an ebony cherub.

The carriages had formed in a continuous line stretching down two blocks, and they moved slowly up after the hearse while the master of ceremonies bustled about seating the ladies; the gentlemen were to go afoot behind the deep bum-bum of the drum. But in the flurry of seating such a large number in the carriages, mistakes were inevitable, and, to their indignant surprise, Brother Syllabubus Jenkins, Sister Clarke, Sister Mack and Sister Langhorne found themselves in the second carriage from the last, when their rank

as Society members entitled them to the second carriage from the mourners. They were seated, and Julius Cæsar had been



put on the box beside the coachman, before they realized their humiliating position. Then a dispute arose. The procession had not yet started, the master of ceremonies, George Washington Fairfax, was running up and down the sidewalk, the undertaker was bringing out more wreaths, and the drum was only booming in a spasmodic way at the head of the line.

Mammy Langhorne looked indignantly at her companions.

"I ain't gwineter play tail-piece ter dis yere fun'ral!" she said. "I'se gwineter hab my place. Where's B'rer Fairfax?"

"He's gwineter keep us heah bekase he's done put dat Miss Boaniah Smith in de fust kerridge; he's courtin' her an' I 'low he'll regret it," said Miss Clarke scornfully; "she's jest one ob dem yaller gals wid mo airs den is good fo' 'er."

"I ain't come heah ter dis fun'ral, sisters, ter mek no disturbance," said Brother Syllabubus solemnly, "but I ain't gwineter let dat big-fish, bow-legged nigger run me down whar I don' b'long. Yo' Jim Fudge," he added to the driver, "yo' jest go right outer heah an' git right in ahead ob de hearse. I reckon I'se gwineter show 'em how ter treat dese ladies, I is!"



But the coachman entertained doubts; the figure of Brother

George Washington Fairfax, in a shiny suit of black and a purple apron, filled his soul with awe.

"Heah, yo' li'le nigger, yo' hol' dem reins," said Jim to Cæsar, "an' I'll go an' see de gentleman—an' min' yo' hol' 'em; dat nigh hoss is er po'erful critter ter run ter er fun'ral."

The eyes of Julius Cæsar gleamed as he took the reins; life ceased to be a dreary show to him. From his high seat he looked over the tops of twenty-four carriages and saw the hearse, the long double file of the brethren waiting for the signal to start, the fluttering folds of the purple banner. The pickaninny gazed joyfully at the horses, two thin, long-eared, hammer headed sorrels, with their noses stretched out toward their stable only seven blocks away. Inside the carriage the roar of a dispute rose; it was wafted up to Cæsar's ears, but he heard it not; the reins were in his itching fingers, the joy of mastery leaped into his soul. He spit on his hands, he straightened himself in his seat, his eyes rolled, he gripped the reins firmly.

"Git up!" he cried, and gave the nigh horse a crack with the whip.

There was a plunge and a kick, a shriek from within, and Cæsar turned the carriage out of the line.

"Hoop-la!" he cried, cracking his whip in the air; "ain't I



gwineter show 'em whar ter put my Ma!" and he drove madly up the street.

The lean sorrels smelled their oats only a few blocks away; they laid their ears back flat and clattered on. The other

horses, tame enough as a rule, started and plunged as the carriage rushed past; the hearse horses made a mad dash for the pavement and were caught with difficulty, the drummer fled from his post to the protection of the tree-box, and the brethren, ranged before across the street from side to side, broke up and scattered. But on clattered the sorrels, and Julius Cæsar, in the frenzy of success, stood up and shouted, cracking his whip. A chorus of screams issued from the interior of the carriage, while many of the other sisters went into hysterics, and pandemonium reigned. Two of the other coaches dashed out of line, a trumpeter was bowled over by the wheels of one vehicle, and clatter, gallop, bang—on came the Langhorne carriage in its mad career.

A milk wagon standing peacefully at the curb offered an enticing wheel, and the sorrels lurched aside. Crack! the milk cans flew, the tame old horse snorted and started down upon the rallying members of the Society, and cast milk and confusion in his wake. But on drove Julius Cæsar—it was a truly Roman triumph, with his victims in the chariot. He had scattered the file of the gentlemen, he had overturned the band, sent the hearse to the sidewalk, and now, clearing the demoralized procession, he started on a clean stretch down Massachusetts avenue toward the P street bridge. But the sorrels had other intentions. The stables were nearer than the bridge and they swerved—swerved so suddenly that the youthful Jehu lost his head and tugged too hard on the left rein, and the carriage, turning very short, reeled, toppled over, and there was a confused mass of purple bonnets, splintered wheels and kicking horses.

But Julius Cæsar fled. Some deep premonitions of a retribution close at hand nerved him to a flight that eluded even the policemen and irate gentlemen in purple aprons.

At a late hour that night a committee of the members of the Society called upon Sister Langhorne to offer condolences for her bruised head and to remonstrate with her about her unruly boy. She heard them with patience, but her ample bosom rose and fell with suppressed emotion.

[Brother George Washington Fairfax felt called upon to tell her that the Society would have to fine her for bringing Julius Cæsar to the funeral. Ten bonnets had been ruined, several dresses spotted with milk, and the feelings of the Society had suffered beyond repair.

"I ain't sayin' dat yo' don' try ter do yo' duty, Sister Langhorne," said Brother Fairfax, "an' I'se glad dat de S'ciety is willin' to oberlook de whole matter providin' dat yo' 'monstrate wid de chile an' pays yo' fines."

"I'se er pore woman, Br'er Fairfax," replied Mammy Langhorne, "but I reckon I pays my dues. I ain't sayin' noffin 'bout yudder folks an' dere chil'un, an' I'd scorn ter



mention dat time yo' hatter send yo' boy, Chawles Augustus ter de Reform School—an' I ain't sayin' dat it done 'em enny good dat I ever heerd on. I specks I'se able ter take care of dat chile when he comes heah."

"Ain't he heah?" asked Brother Fairfax, wiping the perspiration from his glistening bald head and smothering his wrath; "mebbe he's gwineter de House ob Correction; mebbe—"

"No, he ain't," interrupted Mammy Langhorne, with a stern look. "I ain't in no need ob enny House ob Correction. I'se gwineter meet dat boy," she added, "an' I'se gwineter—"

A small black figure lurking in the shadows of the open window, bent forward to listen to the voice of the charmer.

"I'se gwineter meet 'im wid de coal shovel, Br'er Fairfax," Mammy said, "an' I 'low yo' might foller my 'xample—Dere—I hear er noise now—yo', Julius Cæsar—"

But Julius Cæsar had fled.

WHAT the Moon Gave:

A Sketch by T. S. B.*



THE little town was quiet as a child's sleep as we came out together into the deserted streets. The evening had been so fulfilled with a pleasant gayety that silence was perhaps natural betwixt us two for a space. The night's stillness, the wind's faint murmur among the trees of the little gardens, were a little strange to us after the music and laughter to which the last few hours had sped so swiftly. Moreover—as I suddenly realized—although I had been much in her company of late, and she forever in my thoughts, this was the first occasion upon which it had been my good fortune to have her to myself. It is true we had wandered apart from the others at times, but never had I had such a sense of possessing her as the quiet country night now gave to me. I quickly understood the reasons for my silence, and, realizing them, resolved to break it. But the resolve was vain. I still walked silently at her side; and she, too, had no words.

We came at last to where another street opened away at right angles to that which we were traversing. It had rained earlier in the day, and the scanty street-lamps showed a few small pools still standing in the roadway. A single policeman came towards us on the pavement at a distance of a few score yards; otherwise there was no sign of life. The young moon was rising over the hills that one saw beyond the further end of the street.

To my amazement my companion stepped from my side, and advanced a few paces towards the policeman. Then she stood upon the pavement and bowed vigorously to some invisible personage. She had turned before I had recovered from my bewilderment. "The new moon!" she cried. "Have you forgotten? Seven bows, and then wish for the thing you chiefly desire in all the world."

*From *Black and White*.

"I had forgotten," I said. "But you also do not remember." I touched my *pince-nez*. "I have looked at it through glass already. I take it I can hardly wish after that?"

She answered with a shade of disappointment in her voice. "No," she said, "I'm afraid you hardly can."

"And you cannot wish for me?" I said.

"One can't wish twice," she said. "You must wish for the thing you desire most in all the world. I have already done that."

"It is my usual luck!" I said resignedly. Then, "The policeman is likely to be curious if we stay longer. Let us set on our way."

The way, of course, was the longest open to us, though there was little enough reason to be discovered why two who had so little to say, should not go directly, for the hour was late and it was still a trifle wet under foot. We had left the young moon behind us now, and it was long before we came to where, as the road descends, the steep hill opposite looks down upon you like a wall, with the great yellow disk of the town-clock looking over it, as it were, like the same moon at its full. Here there were some few people afoot, but we passed on and turned away again into a road more quiet than any by which we had come hitherto. I was still very silent, because I greatly desired to find speech, and could think of nothing it was possible to say, except one thing, that seemed to me unutterable. I grew angry with myself, for she had a pretty gift of conversation, and I had heard her speak of a certain nameless male who could not talk as she would have a man talk on occasion, with an unrestrained vivacity that made me shudder in the remembrance, for the sake of what she must be thinking of me at this moment. So we went on in a stupid silence until we had come to the gate of the garden she made fragrant by walking in sometimes.

"Good night!" she said, closing the gate behind her, but not yet retreating.

"Good night!" I said, looking with longing at the little pale face that glimmered so mystically in the darkness. "It will soon be good-by!"

"I am sorry," she said. "I am sorry that you did not get your wish."

"Oh, the moon," I answered. "I had forgotten. And you

could not wish on my behalf. But you had your wish, and I—had just my luck."

"Is it so bad?" she asked. "To tell the truth," said I, "'tis that I am wondering about at this moment, and you are the person who can tell me. What was your wish when you bowed to the little moon just now?"

"But you must keep your wish a secret," she answered.

"I will tell no one," I said. "But shall we make an exchange of confidences? If I had wished—"

"And you didn't?" says she.

"Not to the moon," said I. "To tell the truth, I doubt her capacity to grant me my desire; for if I had prayed to her I should have asked for what you alone can give. I want your love, sweetheart." She did not answer. "How is it with my luck?" I added. The gate was between us. "There is no need to tell me," I said. "It shall be good night and good-by together, then."

But my dear lady laughed softly, and in a moment the gate stood open again and I was at her side, for her voice told me I need no longer fear the influence of moon or stars.

"And your wish?" I said presently.

She answered with another question: "Was ever any prayer so quickly granted?" she said.





SERAPHINA: A Tale of the Franco-German War, by Andrew W. Arnold*

HALF-WAY between Soissons and Rheims, on a good map, you will see marked the little village of Marigny-les-Tours. It was there that I, Etienne Meynard, was born, and where my father—aye, and his father before him—carried on the business of a blacksmith. Whether he had had some white wine or not—and my brawny, jovial farther did not object to it—no man could shoe a horse as well or as quickly or make a wheel-tire as accurately as he.

Nearly all of the land in the district belonged to the great family of the St. Claires, who lived in the château overlooking the hamlet.

Monsieur St. Claire had of late years been a confirmed invalid; but his wife, who was an Italian, was a very energetic and kind-hearted woman, and beloved by all the country-side. No man could have looked after the estate better than she did. They were a very rich family, for the land produced wine of the finest quality, which was sent off to Rheims and Epernay; and, moreover, the eldest son was a partner in a large Champagne house. They had, besides, two daughters and another son, named Hubert. The latter and I were foster-brothers. As a child he had been rather delicate. The doctor said madame pampered him too much, and that he should be more in the open air; consequently they often sent down for me to go up to the château to play with him.

Ah! what snowballing we had in the winter; and, when the bright spring came, what birds' nests we took, as we rambled about the beautiful park together! So it came to pass that, although our relative positions were so different, we two became almost like real brothers. But at last the time came for him to go to school, and then—as he was going into the army—to St. Cyr; and we only saw each other in the holidays.

*From Chambers's Journal.

It happened one day, just after he had got his commission, that we went bathing. Hubert remained in the water longer than I, and I was nearly dressed when he was seized with cramps. I went at once to his assistance, and brought him to land just in time to save him. I was doing what I could to restore him to consciousness when his father and mother luckily drove up. Hubert was placed in the carriage, and servants sent in all directions for the doctor. Nothing could exceed the gratitude of his parents. Our little cottage and the forge, which belonged to the St. Claires, was given, as it stood, to my father; and my sister Josephine was made a dairymaid at the château. They wished to have me grandly educated; but my father thought it better for me to remain with him and help him in his business.

When madame came from Italy she brought with her an Italian maid who was very handsome, and she married Jacques Marly, the steward, who lived in a beautiful cottage just outside the village on the road to Fismes. There were queer stories about her, and she was said to have had a horrible temper. However, Marly was only married about a year, as his wife died soon after giving birth to Seraphina. The latter and I grew up together, and she always showed a preference for me over all the other lads of the village. Seraphina was now sixteen, and I was two years older.

One fine June day—we two always went about together when we could—she and I went fishing in the Arditre. Under the shade of a hawthorn-bush that was then in full bloom we sat down side by side, with the meadow-sweet around us. I threw my line into the little stream, and we waited patiently for a bite. The insects buzzed, and the bees hummed as they scrambled into the foxgloves on the bank; but never a fish, though we could see plenty of them, came to bite. One old roach came and had a look at the worm, but superciliously swam away again, and I fancy he told the young ones not to go near it.

"There's too much sun, Etienne," said Seraphina.

"No; they are frightened at your eyes," I replied; "they shine too bright. Ah, Fina! if you were only at the end of the hook they would come in dozens to see you, because you are so beautiful."

"But the other day you said Suzanne Blanc's eyes were beautiful," she replied.

"So they are; but not to be compared to yours."

"Why do you think I am so lovely?" she answered, placing her hand on my shoulder.

"Because I can't help it, and because I love you," I replied; and as she was so close I kissed her.

"And I love you, too," she said, returning my kiss; "and when we grow up we will be married."

"But what will your father say?" I asked.

"Oh, I can do what I like with him," she replied. "But what will your parents say?"

"Whatever they say," I answered, "I will marry you, my darling." And so we became betrothed, and considered ourselves the happiest people in the world. But at the same time my parents did not really like Seraphina; but I would have her, and the beautiful girl would not, she said, marry any one else, and so they had to agree to it. Besides, old Marly was known to have saved up a great deal of money, and my mother was rather influenced by that, for she was a very saving woman. It was a good thing she was, for my father, who had been a sergeant-farrier in the Dragoons, had the careless, happy-go-lucky ideas of a soldier. He loved to sit smoking and drinking at the "*Faisan d'Or*," and he would have spent the bulk of his money there but for his thrifty wife. As I thought upon it I could hardly believe my good fortune when Seraphina promised to be mine, for she was far and away the most beautiful girl in the whole district; she even promised to surpass her mother. She had, so folks said, the same sharp-cut features, the same brilliant dark eyes and splendid figure; and the bloom of health and youth showed through her olive complexion, reminding one of some of the Italian pictures up at the château. Seraphina was no favorite among the other girls, not only because of her looks, but because she inherited, if the truth must be told, some of her mother's temper. But I was young then, and I did not think of that. Those eyes, that had been flashing a moment before, shone with a warm, caressing glance, when I approached, that filled me with delight and love.

This was in May, 1868, and the time had now come for me to serve my three years in the army. There were three or four other lads who had to go at the same time; and all the village turned out to see us off. Some of the mothers cried

bitterly, as if their sons would never come back; and, in fact, some of them did not.

"Good-bye, my darling Etienne," cried Seraphina, throwing her arms round my neck as she pressed her soft cheek against my own and covered me with kisses. "You will be back in three years. I shall be a fine girl then."

"You are now," I returned, vainly trying to keep down the moisture that would swell into my eyes.

"And then, when you come back, we will be married, and won't we be happy! Keep up your courage. I will write, my darling, and tell you every single thing that goes on."

I could not trust myself to answer; but, pressing her once more to my breast, and kissing my father and mother, my sister and little brother, I went after the others, who had got some way in front. None of us said much at first; but when we came to the top of a slight incline we stood and waved our tricolor-decked hats to our families, who were standing in a group to see the last of us. But we were all young and full of hope, and our spirits soon returned. Besides, having more money than we were used to, we stopped at the inns on our way; and, partly out of bravado and partly to hide our real sorrow, we took more than we ought to have taken. Consequently we were all three-parts drunk when we reached our destination.

Hubert St. Claire would have liked to go into some expensive cavalry regiment; but his mother did not wish him to do so, because his uncle commanded a regiment of *chasseurs à pied*, whose dépôt was at Epernay. So Hubert got a commission in that regiment. Most of the men in our district served in the regiments quartered at Rheims or Soissons; but, partly because I was a tall, strapping lad (for they were finer men in the *chasseurs* than in the line), and partly through Monsieur St. Claire's influence, I joined his regiment, and became Hubert's servant.

I took to soldiering naturally; I suppose I inherited my father's reckless, dare-devil character. I had more money than most of my comrades, for Hubert St. Claire was very kind to me in that respect; and, as I spent it freely, I soon became a favorite. But at the same time, as I was quick and paid assiduous attention to my duties, I also earned the approbation of my officers.

Seraphina was as good as her word in writing to me. She

seemed to find in doing so a vent for her pent-up feelings; and no one ever received more passionate love-letters during the first few months of my sojourn at Epernay than I did. She was an odd girl. I realized this more now that we were separated. Her peculiar character came partly from her father as well as her mother, for the former was a very serious, taciturn man, in many respects far above his station. He seldom mixed much with those in the village, remaining in his pretty cottage, reading the numerous books he had got; but for all that he was a good steward and looked sharply after the interests of the St. Claires, driving a bargain as close for them as he would for himself.

Having little to do, Seraphina spent a great deal of her time in reading romantic love-stories and memoirs. In fact, she did not hesitate to borrow from the latter. "Adieu, my love, my darling!" she wrote to me in a letter soon after we had parted. "What inquietudes do I not suffer from thy absence! I kiss you in my sleep as I dream of you, for I love you, dearest Etienne; I love you as no one ever loved before." All this ardor naturally filled me with delight, and I thought it very fine writing, for I did not know then that she was simply copying the intercepted *billets-doux* of Pauline Bonaparte. But as time went on my *fiancée's* epistles became cooler.

I had served eighteen months when she told me that a new schoolmaster had arrived in the village, who was young and very handsome, and who, curiously enough, had served in my regiment; and, to my disgust, most of her letters from that time were filled up with the doings and sayings of this fellow. Soon after that I had a letter from my sister Josephine. She told that she was going to be married to Madame St. Claire's coachman; and she also informed me that the new schoolmaster, whose name was Felix Barcères, was very often seen with Seraphina. This, coupled with what I could guess from my *fiancée's* epistles, filled me with rage and jealousy, and I wrote at once to Seraphina. She never answered me; but, from all accounts, she seemed to pay little heed to my remonstrances. In the following June I got a short furlough to attend my sister's wedding.

Seraphina received me kindly, but with none of that warmth which from her promises two years ago I considered I had a right to expect. I had left her a slight and beautiful

girl; she was now a fully developed woman, and looked more than her age. I was intoxicated by her ravishing beauty, and in my heart I almost pardoned the schoolmaster for making love to her, for I did not understand how any one could help it; but for all that I vowed on the first opportunity to have it out with him.

The wedding took place the next day; it was quite a grand affair, and all the village was *en fête*. The St. Claires gave Josephine a handsome *dot*, and Madame herself with the young ladies actually came down to the breakfast, and partook of the white soup which, in Champagne, is always a great feature at a wedding; and in the afternoon we all danced in the park. I expected to see Barcères; but he prudently kept out of my way. Unfortunately it came on to rain in the evening, so we went back to the cottage. My father and the bridegroom's father found they had both served in Africa, and they took glass after glass of the good wine that Madame St. Claire kindly provided, drinking to the health of their old comrades, so that after a while they could not stand. Then the village Musical Society commenced to play; but, as they were all drunk, they made so much noise that Seraphina—who had lately found out that she had a fine voice, and consequently wished to sing—got angry, and I ordered them to cease. This ended in a general *mêlée*, in which some of their instruments were broken, and it was only stopped by the joint efforts of the *curé* and the doctor. After Seraphina had sung, the bridegroom's cousin, who was in the Zouaves, gave us a song that made the girls blush; and as he would not desist, he and I had a fight in which I nearly killed him; so that the day that had begun so auspiciously ended in an orgy; but for all that the villagers looked back on it as one of the happiest in their lives.

The following morning I asked Seraphina why she had not written to me so frequently.

"Well," she answered, "you wrote so seldom to me; and—besides—you can't write like—"

"That fool of a schoolmaster," I replied.

"Yes, you are right there. He can write. Why, he actually had an article in *Le Petit Courier* entitled the Spring-time in the Woods, all about——"

"Oh, yes, I know," I exclaimed savagely, "all about the

confounded birds. Bah, *quel blague!* He's as blind as a bat to begin with, and cannot tell a thrush from a linnet."

"And not only that," she added, seeming to enjoy my rising anger and paying no attention to what I said, "he can write poetry too. He has written me a lovely poem, *Étoile du Nuit*. Now listen to this," she continued, taking a paper from her breast and seating herself on the corner of the table, swinging her little foot to and fro.

"Let me see it," I said, trying to take it from her.

"No, no! you keep back and I'll read it to you.

"*Étoile du Nuit*"——

"What nonsense!" I interposed.

"Is it? You have not heard it yet. Anyway, I am certain you could not write as good."

Then she commenced again:

"*Étoile du Nuit! dans les*"——

But I could not stand any more; and, snatching up my shako, I darted off to settle accounts with Barcères.

He was a tall, delicate-looking man with glasses, and had rather long hair and a sallow face. My appearance seemed to give him anything but pleasure.

"What do you want?" he asked nervously, keeping the door ajar.

"I'll tell you when I'm inside," I replied. "Now, look here," I continued, after he had reluctantly permitted me to enter, "I was betrothed to Seraphina Marly long before you ever came here."

"But," he interposed, "I suppose a girl is allowed to change her mind if she likes. Ovid says——"

"Who the mischief is Ovid?" I replied, thinking he meant some one in the village, though I have learned since that he was a Latin poet. A smile of contempt crept over his pale countenance, which made me more angry than ever. "I give you fair warning, you dog," I continued, bringing my fist down on the table, "if you get making love to her behind my back, or writing any more of your infernal poetry, I will break every bone in your body." The smile had left his face now, and he stood trembling, as white as a sheet.

The following day I had to start very early, as I had to walk two leagues to Fismes, which was the nearest station. I resolved to see Seraphina ere I went. Marly's cottage, as I have said, stood by itself a little back from the road at the

end of the village, and in the porch was a wicker cage which still contained a blackbird I had given his daughter. Seraphina, I knew, would still be sleeping, so I threw some pebbles against her window; but this had no effect. There was a water-butt just handy; so, clambering on to that, I tapped at the window with my bayonet, and in a moment she appeared.

"What, Etienne!" she exclaimed, "is it you, and must you really go so early?"

"I must, my love," I answered; "I cannot help myself. But I shall be back in a year, and then what a wedding we will have!"

"Kiss me, *mon chéri*," she cried, leaning out of the window. By my standing on tiptoe she was just able to throw her rounded arms about my neck, her thick black hair falling in clusters on my shoulder as she pressed her warm lips against my own.

Reluctantly I let her go and jumped to the ground.

"Adieu!" she cried. "Take this;" and, leaning out, she picked a piece of honeysuckle within her reach and threw it to me. I picked it up, kissed it, and hurried off; but I turned once more to gaze upon her, and the picture she presented as she stood at the flower-framed window, with her raven tresses on her shoulders, and the first crimson blush of the early dawn falling upon her, remained in my heart for many a day. I little thought then under what circumstances our next meeting would take place.

All the world knows now how a dispute between France and Prussia arose in June, 1870. We soldiers knew little about the merits of the case, and cared less; but the chance of seeing some service filled us with pleasure. Fully a week before war was actually declared the reserves began to pour in. Going across the barrack-square, to my surprise I saw Barcères. I had forgotten that he belonged to the *chasseurs à pied*. His appearance gave me unbounded delight, and I went off at once to Hubert St. Claire.

"My lieutenant," I said, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"What is it?" he replied.

"That reservist Barcères may be appointed to my squad;" for I had recently been made a corporal.

Hubert St. Claire knew all about my love-affair, and a smile crossed his face as he guessed the reason.

"All right," he answered. "I will speak to my uncle the colonel;" and it ended in the schoolmaster being placed under my orders.

It is possible for an unscrupulous *sous-officier* to make the life of any private a perfect burden to him on a very small pretext. He can get a soldier sent to the *consigne*; but though I had, of course, no intention of behaving unfairly to the man whom fortune had placed in my power, I resolved that if it ever came to any fighting, he should have as good a chance of being hit as I had myself. When Barcères found out how he was situated, his dreamy eyes had a frightened, startled look in them that highly amused me. It enabled me to judge his character pretty accurately, and I reckoned he would have given all he had to be back at Marigny once more.

In the highest spirits we left Epernay at the end of July for Châlons. We thought that when we got there we should go on to Metz; but we were informed that Strasburg was our destination. When we arrived at Nancy, so great was the confusion and lack of organization that, as the whole line was blocked, we were detained, and started to march to the frontier. This confusion soon became worse. We no sooner received an order to march to one place than we received a fresh one to go somewhere else. But on the 1st of August we found ourselves at Niedebrohn, on the road to Bitche, where De Failly had his headquarters.

In spite of the hard work this marching and countermarching entailed, we were all, from the colonel downwards, full of hope. I can truly say that at the time the idea of defeat never once entered our heads; and we reckoned that when we got into Germany we should be amply compensated for all our trials. The country-people welcomed us warmly. At first we had plenty to eat, and it was only as we got nearer the frontier that provisions began to become scarce. This arose from other regiments having gone before us and taken the bulk of them. I enjoyed the life. Round the camp-fire of a night Sergeant Bondy, who wore on his breast the Cross of the Legion of Honor and many medals, told us stories of his campaigns, and we had no doubt about the result of the coming one.

We had started for Bitche on the morning of the 3d of

August, when we were suddenly ordered to go to Weissenburg, where General Abel Douay was in command. Not far from Weissenburg we came to the house of a man who, we soon found, was mad. He had some most beautiful white chickens. We had had really nothing to eat all day, and we quickly wrung their necks; but the worst of it was that there were only a score of them, and that did not go far among a half-famished battalion. However, I and two comrades got an old rooster between us, and that was the last good meal I had for a long time. I laugh now when I think of the unfortunate owner, who told us these chickens were "sacred" birds, and were given to him by the Emperor of China; and he prophesied that all manner of evil would fall on us for our sacrilegious proceedings. Leaving the poor man tearing his hair, we continued our march to Weissenburg. We arrived late in the evening, and found that we belonged to the First Brigade, which was led by General Pelletier de Montmarie of the 2d Infantry Division, under General Abel Douay of the First Corps, which was commanded by MacMahon.

The château of Geisburg, which overlooks Weissenburg, was occupied by one battalion of the 74th, and as the little town was crammed full of troops, comprising the other battalion of the 74th, with Zouaves and Turcos, we had to make the best of our little *tents d'abri*. In the ordinary way this would not have mattered; but the weather, which had been very close and sultry all day, broke up, and in the night a torrential shower of rain fell, which, though it cleared the air, drenched us all to the skin.

The following morning, after we had had our *café*—but, alas! nothing to eat—we waited to be inspected by General Montmarie, who complimented our colonel highly on the state of the regiment. As soon as the inspection was over, my company was sent down to the station to bring up provisions and, if possible, some cattle for the battalion. Our cavalry had reconnoitred the previous day, and reported that the enemy were in no great strength.

We French little dreamt—and we had not altogether more than eight thousand men—that within almost a league we had opposed to us fully forty thousand Germans, composed of two corps of Bavarians under Von der Tann and Von Hartmann, Kirchbarch with the 5th Corps of Poseners, and the Hessians of the 11th under Von Bose—in fact, nearly the whole of the

Third Army Corps under the Crown-Prince. In happy ignorance of what was in store for us, we went gaily along, only too pleased to think that at last we were going to get something to put in our stomachs. We had reached the bottom of the hill, and were near the bridge that crosses the little river Lauter, which runs through the valley, when we heard the stirring rattle of the side-drums, and the next moment we saw the 1st Regiment of Turcos advancing at the double toward us, so we stood aside to allow them to pass. I had never seen these men before. The whites of their eyes were more apparent from their ebony skins; and, with their thick lips and dare-devil bearing, I thought I would rather have them for friends than foes. They might have been going to a review, as they laughed together in guttural tones. Suddenly we saw aides-de-camp tearing about. There was evidently something going to take place; but we had not the slightest glimmering of what it could be. Some said the Prussians were on our flank, and others that they were just in front, and we were going to attack them; but we laughed at this and pressed on to get the stores we needed so much.

As soon as the Turcos had gone past we fell in behind them. We had just reached the station when a battery of artillery came tearing along. "*Houp-là!*" shouted the drivers as they pulled up, nearly bringing their horses on their haunches, and at once they began to unlimber the guns on some rising ground a little to our rear. Just then the shells from the German batteries at Schweigen came whistling through the air. It was the first time I had ever heard a live shell, and I confess I did not much like the sharp whistle of them. The tocsin sounded in the town, sending its lugubrious tones down the vale. The station, we found, was held by one battalion of the Turcos, the others having taken up positions farther on among the hops. Our artillery at once opened fire on our foes in the Bienwald, which is a continuation of the chain of wooded hills leading to the Black Forest.

We could find no cattle; but the sub-lieutenant, who had only just joined our regiment from St. Cyr, ordered us to commence at once unloading some rice from the trucks. The shells now began to fall faster and faster around us; and after a while the bullets from our hidden foes commenced to pitter-patter on the wall of the goods-shed, causing us young soldiers involuntarily to duck our heads. We had filled one cart, and

the Turcos had just opened fire, when an officer on the staff of General Pellé tore up.

"What on earth are you doing?" he shouted to our lieutenant; and he ordered us at once to desist from our work and to take our place beside our dusky friends.

"Now, *mes enfants*," said Sergeant Bondy gaily, "*le bal commence*. You will see how we shall set these beer-swilling Prussians the tune they are to dance to. *Parbleu!* they will remember it."

None of us doubted the veteran's assertion for a moment; but I have often thought of his words since, and when I do I hardly know whether to smile or to swear.

With alacrity we commenced to carry out the order of the officer. For my part, it was just what I wanted, as I did not care for being shot at without replying; so I, with some others, clambered on to a coal-truck and commenced to fire at our foes—whom we could now see distinctly in sky-blue uniforms and crested helmets, and who, we learnt, were Bavarians—issuing from the woods to attack us under cover of the fire of their terrible artillery. So thick did the shells fall around us that our own gunners were, after losing their commander, compelled to retreat and take up a position more to the rear.* The worst of it was, that from that point—their guns being merely four-pounders—they could not reply at all to the German artillery; still, from their new position they sent shell after shell into the advancing infantry. My spirits rose as the fighting progressed; and, carried away by the excitement, I forgot all sense of danger.

The Turcos fought splendidly; they needed no encouragement. It was more a case of their officers holding them in, or they would have rushed forward to meet their foes. In the midst of the battle a train with reinforcements from our 8th Corps at Strasburg actually came steaming slowly into the station, the men jumping from the carriages and joining eagerly in the fray. The Bavarians were not three hundred mètres from us when a shell, which happily did not explode, struck the wheel of the truck I was in and threw me and some others down in a heap. It was indeed lucky it did not burst, for at the same moment another shell struck a telegraph-post

*Thus verifying the maxim of Napoleon that "it is impossible to make artillery fire on masses of infantry if they themselves are attacked by artillery. They will either turn their fire on the opposing batteries, or, if outranged, they will retreat."

and burst almost over where we were standing. Springing up, I got into another truck and commenced firing again. Our foes had got within two hundred mètres of us now; but our fire, especially from some of the Turcos among the hops, which took them on the flank, was so deadly that they fell back, in spite of the endeavors of their officers. But it was only for a moment, for they soon received heavy reinforcements. A wagon full of forage, next to the one I was standing in, caught fire, and the heat obliged us to evacuate it. At that moment I caught sight of Barcères cowering under the very wagon that was alight.

"Come out, you infernal coward!" I cried; and I compelled him to take up a position with me behind some casks, where, kneeling down, we were able to fire with a certain amount of safety. But no mortal men could stand the fire to which we were submitted. To give an idea of what that fire was like, I may state that no less than thirty guns, posted on the heights of Schweigen, concentrated their efforts on that little station, and consequently the shells fell right into the very midst of us. Under cover of this the Bavarians attacked us once more, and fought their way into the station itself. Some of them rushed at our little group. I shot one, and as another sprang on the casks to get at us I ran my bayonet through his chest. Good heavens! it makes me shudder now as I remember his face as he fell back. The goods-sheds behind us was in ruins, and the stationmaster's house was in a blaze.

"Come on," cried Sergeant Bondy; "it's all up."

The sergeant may be alive now for all I know; but these were the last words I ever heard him speak, for at that moment he sprang into the air and fell behind some cases. A regular panic seized us. Fear is very contagious. Every man ran, right and left, many throwing away their rifles to run faster. Seeing the lieutenant making off towards Altenstadt, I and what few of us remained followed him. Nor did we stop till we got there, and then, to our joy, we heard some of our own men, who were posted in a pretty little cottage covered with roses, with a garden in front, facing a road, shout to us to make haste. At the window of the cottage I saw Hubert St. Claire. When I regained my breath I took up my position behind a wall with my comrades.

All this time the battle was raging fiercely, the Prussians

attacking the Château of Gniesberg with the King's Grenadiers, under cover of their batteries at St. Paul's. But we had enough to occupy our attention. The Bavarians, having driven us out of the station, began to follow up their advantage and opened fire on the village we held. They drove us from some houses to the left, and then their infernal shells began to fall among us once more. Two, one after another, fell right on the house, and set it on fire. At that moment the adjutant, who was close to me, was hit; but I caught him up and carried him behind the cottage. I had just done this when our men came rushing from the burning building; and among them, to my surprise, I saw a tall, fair-haired, very beautiful girl. Her blue eyes were wild with terror. I chanced to be the nearest to her.

"Oh, save my father!" she cried, clutching hold of my arm. "He's ill, and can't help himself." I could not resist her imploring glance, and, dropping my gun, I rushed upstairs. Through the blinding smoke I saw a figure on the bed, and in another moment, though I was half-suffocated by the smoke and my eyes were full of water, I brought him safely to his daughter. I was amply compensated by the look of gratitude she gave me. When I had placed him in a summer-house she caught hold of my hands and kissed them. I would have liked to remain, but I dared not. I had hardly taken my place again behind the wall when a dense column of light-blue figures was seen coming up the road opposite. We poured a withering fire into them, and I think we could have driven them back; but a cry arose that we were taken in the rear, and a regular *sauve-qui-peut* followed. Hubert St. Claire and I were about the last to leave. At that moment I caught sight of some beehives. Our foes had just reached the low wall, when, catching up a huge stone, I threw it at the hives and knocked one of them over.

"Bravo!" shouted my lieutenant; "that will stop the devils. *Sacré bleu!* you deserve a commission for that."

A mitrailleuse could hardly have been more effective. The oncoming Germans went right into the midst of the infuriated little creatures. These Bavarians did not fear bullets; but they did not bargain for bees, and retired so hastily that Hubert and I and some others easily made good our retreat.

There was a field at the back of the houses. Our men were running across it as fast as they could to get refuge among

some hops, when suddenly some cavalry—the famous Black Brunswickers—appeared on our left, and commenced cutting down the fugitives, and scattering them right and left. Luckily there was a wood to our right, and Hubert St. Claire at once made for it, and I followed. Just in front of us I saw Felix Barcères; he was not really very strong, and we soon passed him and reached the wood in safety. We had hardly done so, when, just as I was putting a cartridge in my gun, I saw a horseman make for the wretched schoolmaster, and, leaning over the saddle, give him a slash on the shoulder that sent him to the ground; but he scrambled up again. His opponent wheeled round with the intention of despatching him; but a bullet from my *chassepot* caused the former to fall forward over his horse, and in another moment Barcères, breathless and pallid with fright, had joined us.

“You owe your life to Meynard,” said Hubert St. Claire.

Barcères made no answer. I was piqued at his ingratitude, and I had it on my lips to tell him he might inform Seraphina of what had taken place; but the poor man was such an abject coward, and seemed so dazed, that I held my tongue. A good many reached the wood; and, under cover of this shelter, we poured such a fire into the Black Hussars that they were only too glad to make off with some prisoners. All this time the fighting continued. Now, it was a very long time since we had got a good meal, and most of us had had enough fighting; but suddenly we heard the “assembly” ring out behind us; and, making our way through the wood, we found ourselves among the Zouaves. At that moment an aide-de-camp arrived, and he ordered us all to advance through some hops in the direction of Geisberg.

“Who goes there?” suddenly shouted one of our *tirailleurs*. The reply was a volley from some unseen foes, and the next moment they were on us. I can give little description of what followed. I remember the cracking of hop-poles, the stabbing and the fighting in the confined place, the shouting of the officers, and the swearing of the men; but at the very beginning I received one blow on my right shoulder and another on the head that sent me senseless to the ground.

When I regained consciousness I found myself in bed in a small room. The sun was setting, tinting the ceiling with crimson. I must have been roused from my torpor by the clank of a bucket-handle. Two of our medicine-majors in

canvas night-shirts, with a chemist-assistant, were close to me. On a wash-stand was a leg they had just taken off.

"Pitch that blood out of the window, and look sharp about it," said the senior surgeon to the assistant. I was seized with a horrible fear. I thought my turn was coming; but I had my fright for nothing, as they were going to turn their attention to a man who, from his large beard, must have been a sapper.

"Oh, let me die in peace!" murmured the poor wretch.

But the elder surgeon paid no attention to his request, and told the assistant to get the tourniquet and the lint. "It will be something to boast of if we succeed," he said.

"But there is no chance of that," whispered his junior, who was standing by the window counting the drops of chloroform as they fell on a sponge.

Probably it was the fumes of the drug that sent me to sleep again, for I remember nothing more. How long I remained in that state I cannot tell; but I gradually became conscious of a beautiful girl standing beside me.

"Seraphina!" I murmured, "is that you?"

"No," replied a gentle voice, "it's not Seraphina. Don't you remember me? You saved my father the other day from the fire. But you must take this now; it will do you good."

My right arm was strapped to my side, my head enveloped in bandages, and I was perfectly helpless. I looked at the girl, and then I recognized her. Stooping over me, she poured some *bouillon* and brandy down my throat, which made me feel better at once.

"You are kind," I said, taking her hand. "Tell me where I am, and how I came here."

"I saw you in a cart with some other wounded men, and I told my father, who sent me out for you, and I had you brought here. Our own doctor in the town is attending you. You must not talk any more now. I will come again soon."

In the same room there were three others who were wounded. There had been four; but one, the poor sapper whose voice I had heard, was lying dead in his bed, with a sheet over his face.

My benefactor's name was Dietzmann, and his daughter's name was Marie. Under the latter's kind nursing I soon began to recover. As I was a prisoner, and found myself in such good quarters, I was in no hurry to get up; and I did not

do so till nearly three weeks had gone by, and then I went and sat with my host.

The house we were in belonged to him. The tenants had fled; and, his own being burnt, he had taken refuge in it. Nothing could exceed Monsieur Dietzmann's kindness to me nor the attention of his beautiful daughter. I told them my history, and they told me theirs.

"It is strange you should be a blacksmith," he remarked. "I also was a smith; but I gradually worked my way up, and now my son manages my ironworks in Strasburg."

It was evident that Monsieur Dietzmann was fairly well-to-do; but he had no pride, nor did he boast of his commercial success. He was a martyr to gout, and one of these attacks had, unfortunately for him, just come on a few days before the battle of Weissenburg. For the time being he was perfectly helpless. The doctors could do little to assuage the pain. He used to say, with a laugh, that swearing gave him as much relief as anything. Now, however, he had nearly recovered. His son's fate in Strasburg was his chief anxiety. I never knew any one more entertaining, and he had, moreover, a keen sense of humor. As he sat up smoking in bed, and playing cards with his daughter and me, one might have thought that he had had no troubles. Much to my regret, the time came at last for my departure.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow," said my kind host, wringing my hand. "You must come and see us when you return; and if you ever want help, let me know."

Marie came downstairs to see me off. "I can never," I said, "thank you enough, ma'm'selle,"

"Don't call me ma'm'selle," she said; "call me Marie."

"Well, Marie, I shall always remember you. When I carried your father out from the fire you kissed my hand; may I now kiss your lips?"

"Oh, yes," she said frankly, with a rosy blush; and I kissed her again and again. The tears came to my eyes, and hers, too, were moist, as I turned away to conceal my emotion.

It was a horrible journey to Frankfort; but the Dietzmans had filled my pockets with provisions and tobacco, so I was better off than many. From Frankfort I was sent to Magdeburg, where I remained till I was liberated. My family sent me a little money; but the dreary weeks passed only too slowly in spite of the small comforts I was able to buy. I wrote a

letter to my kind friends at Weissenburg, and Marie sent me a long one in return, telling me that her father was now able to get about, and her brother was safe in Strasburg, though the ironworks had been a little damaged by the bombardment. I wrote, of course, to Seraphina as often as I could. To my chagrin, I received no reply; but as I thought she never received my letters it did not trouble me much at first.

It was towards the middle of October that I received a letter from my sister Josephine. Hubert St. Claire had escaped from Weissenburg; but he had been so badly wounded at the battle of Beaumont that he was incapable of serving any more, and had returned to the château. This was bad news; but it was nothing to what followed. Barcères, too, had escaped, and returned to the village with his arm in a sling. According to his own account, he had performed prodigies of valor, and it was only his wound that prevented his enlisting again. Seraphina believed all this, and she showed her commiseration for Barcères by allowing him to make love to her in the most open way.

This intelligence threw me into a paroxysm of rage and jealousy. I felt like a wild beast in a cage. Some comrades had succeeded in escaping, and my first impulse was to try and do the same. But I had no knowledge of the language, and little money, and I knew that in case of failure I should be shot. It was not that I feared that risk so much, but I wanted to live. Wherever Barcères might be, I would find him. I wished to live, if it was only to thrash him within an inch of his life. For many days I brooded over my wrongs. I had no doubt that Seraphina and her lover would get far away ere my return; nor did I see how I could prevent them. Then suddenly I thought of Hubert St. Claire, and I wrote to him imploring him to use his influence to make Barcères continue his service. I was successful. The lieutenant saw the Mayor of the district, and within a fortnight after the despatch of my letter my cowardly rival was on his way to Dijon, though his departure was a good deal hastened by Gambetta's agent, who had hit on a very happy plan of compelling numerous young men to fight for their country who wanted to escape doing so. Under the heading of "*Poltrons*," a list was stuck on the church door of those who would not serve. Barcères, knowing what Seraphina would think of him if his name appeared on the dreaded list, accordingly

thought it best to join again, and in November he set off with some others for Dijon.

It was only in driblets that the Germans allowed their prisoners to return. I considered myself fortunate that I was able to do so in the following May. It was raining hard when I arrived one evening at Fismes, determined to see Seraphina. Through the soaking rain and the gathering darkness I hurried on to Marigny, and at length the spire of the old church came in sight, and soon afterwards the steward's cottage. Anxious to know my fate, with a trembling hand I knocked at the door. It was nearly nine; but the light inside showed that the inmates had not yet gone to bed.

"What, Etienne! It is really you?" exclaimed Jacques Marly, as he cautiously opened the door.

"Yes," I answered, bursting into the room. "Seraphina, my love, my darling—"

But the look on the girl's face as she rose from the supper-table made me pause.

"Why do you come here?" she said fiercely, and her splendid eyes flashed with anger. "Did you not get my letter?"

"What letter?" I replied, my heart sinking within me.

"The letter in which I told you that I loved Felix Barcères, and would marry no one else."

"*Mon Dieu!*" I exclaimed, "to think that you should care for such an arrant coward——"

"It's a lie," she broke in. "Even if it were true, he is dead now;" and I saw the tears come to her eyes.

"Dead?" I cried.

"Yes, dead; and you and that Hubert St. Claire killed him." She was gradually working herself up, and cared nothing for what she said. "Don't try to deny it; you got the captain to send him off. It was he who hounded him out of the village to join Bourbaki. It was owing to you two that he died like a dog in the snow." She was so carried away by her passion that for a moment she stood perfectly speechless, holding on to a chair with a heaving bosom and flashing eyes.

"Listen," I replied.

"But I won't listen. Stand off," she cried as I approached.

"But you shall!" I returned, fast losing control of myself as my anger rose.

"Shall I?" she exclaimed; "then take that." And at the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, she had snatched a knife from the table and made a lunge at my breast. I reeled under the force of the blow, but the fragile blade broke at the handle as it struck on the thick leather case I wore over my heart, which actually contained her own treasured love-letters. Overcome by her emotion, the infuriated girl would have fallen but for her father, who caught her in his arms.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, wringing his hands as he half-led, half-carried her to a sofa. "*Mon Dieu, elle est folle! elle est folle!*" I quickly regained my composure, and assisted him by pouring cold water on the pallid face of his unconscious daughter. But with all our care it was some time before we could bring her to, and then she remained in a half-dazed state and quite oblivious to what was going on around her.

"*O ciel,*" cried the old steward in an agonized tone, "that it should ever have come to this! I always felt uncertain about her. I always told her to govern her temper. I am ruined. I am ruined;" and the tears trickled fast down the old man's cheeks.

"Have no fear for me," I said. "I love her even now. For her sake, for your sake, we must let no one know of this."

"You are kind," he said; "but she shall go into a convent. It is best for her; it is best for all."

I saw I could do no good; and, hardly knowing what I was about, I left him.

As I stood in the pelting rain, it all seemed like a horrible dream. There was a brook on the other side, now turned into a swollen stream, and as I listened to the wild rush of the waters I felt half-inclined to throw myself into it; but the sound of the church clock striking ten brought me to myself, and I hurried up the deserted street to my own home.

"Etienne!" exclaimed my father; and in a moment my mother and all came hurrying down to welcome me, for they had gone to bed long before.

"You are pale," said my mother; "those Prussian brutes have not given you enough to eat."

"Oh, yes," I answered, "they treated us fairly well."

"You have seen Seraphina?" she replied, with the intuitive quickness of a woman.

"Yes," I replied; "we are no longer betrothed."

"A good thing, too," said my father.

"Yes, a very good thing," repeated my mother angrily. "A nice life that *diable aux jupes* would have led you. I never liked her, only you would have your own way."

I feared they would notice the rent in my coat where the blade had torn it a little; so, pleading fatigue, I went upstairs.

I did not see Seraphina about the next day; but I met her father. He was still full of the idea of placing his daughter in a convent. I knew what the threat of such a horrible fate would be to a girl like Seraphina, and for my part I was not the least surprised when I heard the next day that she was missing. Even her father had no knowledge of her whereabouts.

The months passed very wearily for me. I helped my father in his work; but I took no interest in anything, not even when the merry vintage-time came round. My mother urged me to marry, which I would have done if I could; but, as it happened, all the girls in our village were very plain, and it is an awful thing to marry an ugly woman—though beauty, of course, is not everything. I had found that out, to my cost, with Seraphina. The fact of it was, I had burnt my fingers so severely—*mon affaire du cœur* had been such a failure—that I looked upon all women with suspicion. But there was one exception, and this was Marie Dietzmann. I could not help often recalling her kind and beautiful face. It came before me at the most unexpected times. I could not make myself believe that there could be anything false in that comely and gentle girl.

Hubert St. Claire had now quite recovered from his wound, rejoined his regiment, and become a captain. It was resolved by the colonel and officers of my old regiment to erect a memorial at Weissenburg to all those who had fallen in that battle. Hubert St. Claire was one of the officers who were deputed to see about this. The Germans had no objection, any more than we had to their putting up memorials in our country.

It was one of those bright, frosty days in January, 1872, when I received a note from Captain St. Claire that he wanted to see me up at the château.

"Etienne," he said, "I have just returned from Alsace, and have something to tell you. I have a letter for you from Monsieur Dietzmann, and no end of pretty messages to give

you from his daughter. Now, if I were you," he added, "I should go and see them. I should not brood over Seraphina any more. There are plenty of other birds in the wood, my boy. Old Dietzmann is very nice; and as for his daughter—well, I was half-inclined to make love to her myself, only I did not want to poach on your preserves. *Ma foi!* she is one of the prettiest and nicest girls I ever met."

"I know she is," I replied; "but she is too high up in the world for me. She would hardly like to take a fellow in my position."

"Well, all I say is," returned my friend, slapping me on the shoulder, "you go and see for yourself. It is regular folly remaining here. You are naturally energetic; it is foolish for you to waste your life in this place. Why, rather than do that, you had better rejoin the regiment, and wait for a commission."

In the letter which the captain had given me from Monsieur Dietzmann, the latter asked me to come and see him; and in a postscript he assured me his daughter had not forgotten me and would be equally pleased. This postscript decided me. I pictured the beautiful girl as I had last seen her, with the tears welling into her soft blue eyes as she wished me good-bye; and the following day I started for Weissenburg.

When at last I arrived at the house, I found M. Dietzmann at home; but his daughter was out. He greeted me very warmly, and upbraided me for not coming to see him before. "I have learnt all about you," he said, "from Captain St. Claire. You know, we Alsatians have the option of remaining here and becoming Germans, or of leaving. I am determined to go. You remember I told you about my ironworks in Strasburg, which I manage with the help of my son. Of course I have lost severely by the war; but the same cause that has half-ruined me has injured others. Carl is an energetic, clever lad, and he has just heard of a business at Chartres. It appears that both the partners were killed in the war, and we can buy it very cheap. It is in the middle of a great agricultural district, and they require a number of agricultural implements. My son has gone there now, and will be back in a day or two. If he thinks well of the affair we shall conclude matters at once. My health is fairly good now, thank Heaven! and I thought that if you liked to join us, as you have all the required practical knowledge, it would be a good thing for you."

"It would indeed. I should like to do so," I answered eagerly; "but where is the money to come from?"

"Your friend the captain is going to make that all right," replied the old man.

I could hardly believe my ears. Hubert had never even hinted at the kindness his family intended to do me. My good fortune seemed too great. I was quite overcome with gratitude.

"Well, you did him a service once," said my host. "You rescued him from the water, just as you rescued me from the fire; so we are both indebted to you."

"And how is Ma'm'selle Dietzmann?" I asked.

"Oh, she is well enough. She has had two offers of marriage since you saw her; but she refused them. I fancy," he continued, with a smile, "she likes somebody else better."

The way he said this made my heart beat a thousand to the minute.

"Do you mean," I asked anxiously, rising from my seat—"do you fancy that it is I who have had the good fortune to please her?"

"Hark!" he said, "I think I hear her. You will soon be able to judge for yourself."

The next moment the beautiful girl was standing in the doorway.

"Ah! and so, M. Meynard, you have really come to see us, have you?" she said, her soft blue eyes brightening with pleasure. "I know you are a plucky fellow," she continued, in a quizzing manner; "but as for your memory"—with a pout—"well, *elle n'existe pas*; and as for your heart—but I won't be cruel, as you have really come."

I always thought her pretty, but now as she stood there, with the warm flush on her dimpled cheeks that her walk in the snow had given her, she looked perfectly lovely.

"I admit, ma'm'selle," I answered, "I deserve all the hard things you say; but you must forgive me. We will be friends now; and I will try to make up for all my past forgetfulness." And I think in this I very soon succeeded.

The weather was too severe for Monsieur Dietzmann to go about very much; but Marie and I were able to take long walks together. It would have been difficult to find two girls more different in character than Marie and Seraphina. I had

seen the former under very trying circumstances. She was anxious and thoughtful then; now I found that she was naturally a very merry girl, and gifted with that rare quality in woman: a keen sense of humor. Moreover, she prided herself on her knowledge of domestic affairs. On the other hand, I rarely remembered Seraphina, except as a child, ever laughing; and I knew that she considered all household matters as beneath her notice. Old Marly would often scold her for reading novels and letting things shift for themselves.

Carl Dietzmann arrived two days after my arrival. He and I were friends at once. He was, as his father had said, a quick, energetic young fellow; and as he gave a very glowing account of the business at Chartres, Monsieur Dietzmann determined to take it and remove there the following March.

As one who had taken part in the battle of Weissenburg, it was highly interesting for me to explore the surrounding country, more especially in the company of Marie.

"You have not been up the Giesburg yet?" she said, one frosty morning.

"No; let us go. I want to see the effect of the Prussian shells on the château."

The view from the top was splendid. Beneath us we saw the little town, with the Lauter running through it, and the Bienwald on the other side of the valley. The blackened walls of many of the houses still remained; the church was a mass of ruins, but the reparation of the station was just being begun.

"It was a fearful time," said my companion thoughtfully, as she gazed over the distant hills, covered with their mantle of snow.

"Yes," I answered; "but it brought me luck at any rate."

"In what way?" she asked, looking at me in surprise. "Was it lucky to be so badly wounded?"

We were standing side by side looking over a low wall.

"Yes," I replied. "But for that I should never have known you. I would run the same risk to-morrow; because, Marie"—and as I spoke I took her little hand in mine—"I love you."

She blushed deeply, but did not move. "Do you really love me?" she said softly.

"Yes, I swear it," I exclaimed, still holding her hand. Her

soft eyes gave her answer, and her lips returned the warm kisses that I showered upon her.

"Well, let us go down and see father," she said.

So, on that ground soaked with the blood of the heroic 74th, we plighted our troth.

"Now, you go in," said Marie, as we neared the house. "You go and ask father."

"No; but you come, too," I replied, for I felt somehow uncommonly nervous.

"Well, I'll follow."

Her good father was seated at the fire reading the paper, which he put down as I entered.

"Yes, my friend," replied the old gentleman when I asked his consent to our marriage. "I give it readily. You are a lucky fellow, though——"

"I know that," I interposed.

"Because Marie has been a good daughter; and," he added sententiously, as though it were quite a new and original idea of his own, "a good daughter makes a good wife."

Our wedding took place a month afterwards, and Hubert St. Claire, to whom I owed so much already, conferred another favor upon me by coming to it.

The business at Chartres, from the very commencement, was a success. My father-in-law, though he was mostly in the bureau, kept his eye on everything. I was always in the foundry. I worked hard; for, now that I was married, I had something to live for.

It was about four years after my marriage, and I had just paid off the last of the loan which the kindly St. Claires had advanced me to put into the business, when I received a Figaro addressed in Hubert's handwriting. I read it all through without seeing anything that interested me particularly, and I wondered why he had sent it.

"Let me look, Etienne," said Marie, placing our youngest child on the ground. "I understand now," she continued. "Listen! 'Opera Comique. Trovatore. Grand début de Ma'm'selle Seraphina Marlini.'"

Glancing over her shoulder, I eagerly read of the success of my old *fiancée*, who seemed to have taken the city by storm. To me it did seem extraordinary to read the eulogies showered on her, for I only thought of her as a peasant girl.

The next post brought a letter from my foster-brother, who

had been at the opera on that occasion, and who had at once set to work to find out all about the *débutante*, whose identity he had guessed at once. And this is what he learnt: After leaving our village so mysteriously, Seraphina had made her way to Italy, where her mother's relatives resided. An uncle, a good musician, had at once gauged her capabilities, and after two years; study she came out at Florence, and finally at La Scala, Milan. Soon after that, on the Riviera, she had made the acquaintance of and married an enormously rich Russian prince; but the excitement of the foot-lights, the love of applause, and the unbounded flattery that her voice and looks entitled her to were far too strong to make her give up her operatic engagements, so she continued to sing, and eventually made her way to Paris.

Now, Marie had never had a holiday since we were married. As for me, I was far too happy and contented with my lot to want one; but Marie became very excited when she heard of the startling success of my late *fiancée*.

"Etienne," she exclaimed, "I cannot control my curiosity. I must see her, I must hear her; besides, I have never been to Paris, so do let us go."

The evening we saw Seraphina she appeared in Meyerbeer's *L'Étoile du Nord*. To tell the truth, once I found myself inside the house I think I became quite as excited as Marie herself; and when Seraphina came on to the stage, smothered in diamonds, such was her beauty and so fine was the quality of her voice that I joined as eagerly as any one in the rapturous applause that greeted her. In the aria with the two flutes she simply brought down the house and carried all before her. It was, indeed, a veritable triumph. But for all that, as I gazed at the beautiful woman, I did not envy the Russian prince, for I knew the diabolical temper that dwelt in that breast beneath all those glittering stones.

"And only to think, Etienne," said Marie, as we were leaving, with the applause still ringing in our ears, "that you might have married her. I never saw any one so lovely. I never heard such a voice."

"Yes, she has a fine voice, *ma chérie*," I answered; but I added, with a kiss, "I know one who is as pretty, and I know a voice that is sweeter."



HE Face in the Crowd:

**The Love Story of a Princess, by
Helen Sherman Griffith. Illus-
trations by Mabel L. Humphrey***



THE express from Janhaus was due at Hofheim at 12.40 P. M. A good many passengers stood on the platform waiting to take the train, but their countenances expressed nothing beyond the usual anxieties of traveling; was all their luggage properly ticketed and had they by any chance missed the train?—this last generally the speculation of old women whom the station clock failed to convince that they had ten minutes yet to wait.

***Written for Short Stories.**

But about the official end of the station—the superintendent's office, ticket and telegraph desks, even the porters' bench—there was a low buzz of subdued excitement. For they knew (and were all the more elated that they had kept their secret, and the general public did not know) that a Princess was arriving by the train now almost due; a Princess of the realm of Janhausland. What mattered it if the realm measured only some scores of square miles? It was ruled by a king and his daughters were royal princesses.

And it was the royal whim of one of the daughters to travel incognito with her maid—to travel as an ordinary voyageur. She was, indeed, a passenger upon the express from Janhaus due at Hofheim at 12.40 P. M. Therefore there was a buzz of subdued excitement among the railroad officials at the Hofheim station, the while the passengers waited placidly or impatiently according to the condition of their spleen.

Twelve-forty arrived, and so did the train, with a grand clatter of punctuality. The passengers to get on crowded about the doors of the emptying compartments intent only upon securing good seats. The superintendent and his second, together with several clerks and all the porters, gathered obsequiously about the carriage which it had been given them to understand Her Royal Highness, Princess Olga, was to occupy. The doors of the various compartments were thrown open by the innocent guards, who did not know that they were carrying a princess, and a young lady stepped forth. She was tall and slender and moved with the noteworthy grace of health and high breeding. Her veiled features suggested youth and beauty of a piquant order. Her toilette was of a Parisian perfection. She was followed by a Gretchen-looking maid, laden with bags and rugs. Of these the maid was immediately relieved by the double line of porters, and a little procession was formed, headed by the superintendent and the royal passenger. That young person appeared to be enjoying herself hugely.

By this time it had got whispered about among the crowd who she was. The arrived travelers ceased to curse the delinquent porters and crowded forward, carrying their own luggage, while the departing passengers craned disappointed necks out of windows to catch a glimpse of passing royalty. And the guards of the train vowed at each compartment at which they were feed (most of the passengers were touring

Americans) that that was the very compartment which had been occupied by the Princess.

The short distance across the station platform was covered in a blaze of glory, and the beautiful young woman was handed obsequiously into a waiting landau.

"To the Grand Hotel," said the young woman in a voice so soft and low that the superintendent, who was young and ardent, blushed at the sound of it.

He bowed low and assured Her Royal Highness that the coachman had had his orders and everything was in readiness; that, indeed, the whole town was at her disposal. And the carriage drove off with a flourish.

II.

The Janhaus express, so called because Janhaus was the capital of Janhausland, in reality started from Schloss-baden, quite at the eastern boundary of the little kingdom and near which the feudal towers of the royal country-seat frowned down upon the frontier.

In the sole occupancy of a smoking compartment of this train lolled a young American, Richard Bretherton by name, co-heir with his sister Marian to the multi-millions of his father, late of the Standard Oil Company. He was to meet his sister at Janhaus, or rather she was to join him there, en route for Paris and thence to America.

Bretherton was feeling generally out of sorts. He had fallen in love with a face and had not been able to find the owner of it. It had happened the summer before, at a band concert on the beach at Ostend. He was glancing over the throng when his eyes were caught by a face of remarkable beauty. As he gazed, spell-bound, the eyes of the woman, as if drawn by a magnetic current, turned and sought his. During that second of their meeting glance her cheeks had flushed, her lips parted and an expression flashed from her hazel eyes that thrilled Bretherton's soul. His instinct was to move forward to her side, but the music ceased, there was a general scattering of the crowd and the face disappeared.

In vain Bretherton haunted the hotels, streets and public places of Ostend. He never saw the face again. He lost interest in his summer plans and abandoned his route of travel in order to visit systematically the various Continental summer outing places. He refused to go back to America

in the fall (for he was sure that the face in the crowd was not American), but journeyed from one prominent city of Europe to another, always searching, searching.

His sister became honestly anxious about him at length and joined him, as keen in the hunt as himself, though, never having seen the face, she could only help him by pointing out every pretty girl that she saw. But the pretty face was never the right one and the sight of beauty only seemed to aggravate the case—for Marian had come to class her brother's desire as a malady and feared for his sanity.

Finally she extorted from him a promise that if by a certain date in the spring his hunt was still unfruitful, he would go back to America with Marian. With this understanding, the brother and sister separated and went their several ways.

The winter passed and the tenth of April approached, the appointed date of their sailing. Heart-heavy and disappointed, Bretherton was on his way to join his sister in fulfillment of his promise. His search had been thorough and unsuccessful.

It chanced that the relative whereabouts of the brother and sister at the time made Janhaus the most convenient meeting place, so that was why Richard Bretherton was lolling moodily in the smoking compartment of a first-class carriage in the Janhaus express.

The train had stopped at a picturesque village some five miles short of Janhaus. Bretherton saw a young lady alight from a compartment next his and, followed by a maid, walk back to the end of the platform, from which spread an extensive view. Bretherton looked idly at first, then with suddenly aroused interest. The girl's face was hidden from him, but there was something familiar about the graceful, alert bearing. With an eager ejaculation, he jumped out of the car and walked swiftly down the platform in pursuit.

The railroad was single-tracked at this part, thus affording exit on either side of the carriages. A coach and four drove up to the platform on the other side of the platform as Bretherton left his seat, the footmen carried an assortment of traps to the train; a young lady alighted from the coach, her maid climbed down from the rumble and with many expressions of farewell, entered the empty carriage which an obsequious footman had thrown open. She noticed that there was other luggage in the compartment and marveled, when

the train pulled out, that their owner did not appear to claim them. They were not a man's things, so she could not suppose their possessor in the smoking carriage. A cursory investigation revealed the fact that they were the traveling bags of Her Royal Highness, Olga of Janhausland.

A temptation came to Marian Bretherton. Suppose she play Princess? No ultimate harm could come of the prank and she had always wanted to know what it felt like. There was a change of guard at Janhaus and the mistaken identity was not discovered. Her composure was somewhat shaken by Richard's failing to join her at Janhaus, but she supposed he would come on to Hofheim and proceeded, under the guise of incognito royalty, to that city, where she was magnificently received, as we have seen, in all good faith.

III.

Bretherton fairly ran down the platform, with no idea in his mind save the fact that before him was the woman for whom he had scoured a continent.

What he should say to her—how explain his speaking at all—had not occurred to him. He simply uttered the one thought of his mind as, with panting breath (as much from sheer joy as running) and bared head, he gained her side and gasped ecstatically:

"At last I have found you!"

The young woman stopped short and faced him, astonishment and outraged dignity expressed in every line of her lovely, girlish countenance.

"Sir!" she cried, drawing herself back haughtily.

As her glance met his there was a perceptible faltering. A distinct blush tinged her cheeks. But she preserved her hauteur.

"By what right do you presume to address me?" she demanded. "Not only to address me at all, but in such familiar terms?"

"Beauteous lady, I have no right save that of love. I——"

"*Altesse!*" murmured the maid to her mistress, in stifled horror.

At that single word Bretherton withered.

"A thousand, million pardons, Your Highness," he exclaimed. "That is," he added with sudden audaciousness, "if it be true."



His head was bowed humbly, but he flashed a side glance at the imperial, slender figure beside him.

"I am Olga of Janhausland," she replied, with magnificent simplicity, at the same time motioning her shocked attendant into the background.

Then she smiled, suddenly, archly, irresistibly, and held out her hand.

"But I am traveling incognito," she said softly.

"Then you remember that afternoon last August? The band concert on the beach at Ostend?" Bretherton asked impulsively. "I have been looking for you ever since."

"*Altessel!*" cried the maid again, daring in her agitation to touch her mistress upon the arm. "The train goes!"

Go the train certainly did, without them, gliding deliberately and with ever increasing speed into the distance with no backward glance for the deserted Princess.

"What shall we do?" she cried aghast.

Bretherton consulted his time-table which proved consoling. A train for Janhaus would pass shortly, which made connection with a local train for Hofheim. Not much time would be lost and Bretherton was inclined to the faith that Dame Fortune was on his side. They concluded not to confide their dilemma to the station agent and returned to the end of the platform, the maid discreetly behind.

"I have searched the world for you," said Bretherton, taking up the thread of their broken discourse. "Where have you been?"

"I know," replied the Princess, then corrected herself hastily. "I mean—I have stayed at home all winter. The Court was in mourning for a great uncle. He was an odious old man, but Court etiquette had to be observed. Oh," she added impatiently, "how I *hate* hypocrisy!"

Bretherton looked up with a gleam of hope in his eyes.

"That is why you are traveling incognito?"

"Yes. I wanted to see what it would feel like to be an *individual*."

"Then why not give it all up? Marry me and become an honored, respected American lady, with a mind and will of your own. I love you and I want you for my wife. Oh, my darling, how I want you!"

He stepped back and faced her, his arms held rigidly to his sides as if he feared they would move of themselves to take

her in their embrace. The Princess Olga looked at him steadily, femininely repressing her real sentiment.

"How can you love me when you have only seen me once?" she asked soberly.

"What matters it *when* love comes; after years or at the first glance? The more quickly kindled spark burns the more ardently. You do not doubt that I love you?"

Even her royal dignity could not cope with this direct challenge.

"How can I when—when you look like that?" she faltered with averted eyes.

"Then you will be my wife?"

The mischief in her overcame the Princess's fears.

"This is so sudden," she murmured, and they both laughed.

"Do you Americans always propose in this headlong fashion?" she asked.

Her shyness and hauteur had both left her, but Bretherton felt put at a greater distance by her manner of good comradeship. When she was indignant he could presume, when diffident he could dare; now he must be merely conventional.

"When we are in earnest we generally go straight to the point," he replied.

"And do you always—always succeed?"

"Where there's a will there's a way!"

"You look as if you had something of a will," she said tentatively.

"I can fight for my principles—and my happiness."

"Would you be so unhappy if——"

"My life would be ruined."

"But you forget that I am a Princess."

"You are a younger daughter of a royal house; you will have none of the petty princes your rank allots you and you are tired of the narrow bounds of Court etiquette."

"You jump at conclusions."

"Not at all. This journey incognito proves it. Why not marry me, whose queen you will always be? In giving up your royal rights you lose nothing but empty forms. As a good woman you will receive equal homage and respect, and as my wife you will have equal luxuries. My love for you——"

At this juncture the train was inconsiderate enough to arrive and Bretherton's eloquence was checked.

IV.

Their journey to Hofheim passed uneventfully. Those few hours were the happiest that Bretherton had ever spent. Princess Olga's mind and character fulfilled the promise of her face and bearing. She was sweet, simple and clever, fond of gayety and not naturally conventional.

Bretherton had the grace to remember his appointment with his sister, and explained the arrangement to the Princess.

"She will turn up all right at Hofheim," he said, with cheerful confidence in Marian's ability to take care of herself. "And then, if Your Royal Highness will graciously accept her hospitality and be her guest in Paris, we can further discuss my hopes and your renunciation."

The Princess smiled demurely and made evasive answer, How was Bretherton to know that this was exactly what she had planned to do?

Their arrival at the Hofheim station, unostentatious and without luggage, was unheeded by the officials, so obsequious a few hours before. When they asked at the hotel to be shown to the Princess Olga's suite, they were intercepted by a *gen-d'arme*, who touched his cap respectfully and announced blandly that they must consider themselves under arrest for being accessory to a conspiracy.

Their astonishment may well be imagined. Their surprise was so evidently genuine that the hotel proprietor explained in deprecatory French:

"The suite of Her Royal Highness is at present occupied by a young lady whom we supposed to be the Princess. She arrived by the train upon which Her Royal Highness was to come, and carried bags bearing the royal arms. But it has been discovered that she is not the Princess, but an American lady, and, we believe, mad."

"We believe nothing of the sort," interrupted the *gen-d'arme* bluntly. "She is as sane as a judge. It is a plot to kidnap the Princess and you two are mixed up in it. You must come with me. If you can clear yourselves, well and good, but you must do it before a magistrate."

"I can't clear myself from that charge," murmured Bretherton in a tender aside to the Princess Olga, "for I have intentions of carrying off a princess."

He did not at all grasp the seriousness of the occasion. Just then a hall-boy addressed the proprietor.

"The lady in the Royal suite says, sir, that she *must* see the gentleman who just arrived. She recognized him from the window and says he can explain everything."

Bretherton was freshly amazed at this, but the gen-d'arme smiled cannily.

"Remember, sir," he cautioned, as they proceeded by the lift to the floor above, "that everything you say will be used as evidence against you."



Bretherton stared and stared again as he looked down the hall and saw standing, in an open doorway, guarded on either side by a policeman, Marian Bretherton, beckoning frantically.

But when Marian saw who accompanied her brother, with entire disregard for the officers who would bar her way, she rushed out into the corridor and swept a profound curtsy to the Princess. Then she rose, and laughing heartily, the two girls embraced.

Bretherton's feeling beggars description. Dumb, numb with stupefaction, he followed the two young women

who were walking, with arms intertwined, down the hall. The Princess's maid fell in behind and the proprietor and gen-d'arme brought up the rear. At the open door Miss Bretherton turned.

"This," she said, indicating her companion, "is the Princess Olga." Sudden profound obeisances. "I am her friend. I—she—I—something went wrong about her taking the train, so I came here to wait for her. You may all await the Princess's orders," she finished magnificently.

Upon which the Princess herself calmly closed the door.

"Marian," said Bretherton sternly, as he faced the two laughing, beautiful young women, "there are a great many things to explain. But the first is to tell me how it happens that you have known this young lady"—bowing to Princess Olga—"and yet let me search the world for her all winter, going nearly mad with disappointment over each failure?"

It was Marian's turn to be astonished.

"What do you mean? Is she—do you mean—are you *mad?*" she cried.

"Not at all mad, now. And I do mean that my quest is ended. I have found the face in the crowd."

Marian looked at the Princess and all at once she understood.

"I never dreamed," she murmured. Then: "This is the explanation of your eulogies on the glory of American citizenship, and your tirades against Court shams," she said slowly.

Princess Olga blushed and glanced at Bretherton.

"Also it explains your extraordinary interest in my brother's love chase," went on Marian. "I only told Olga, Dick," she added apologetically. "But I *had* to have a confidant and Olga seemed so interested. And no wonder," fixing keen eyes upon the confused Princess.

Bretherton, never slow at seeing through things, crossed and took the Princess in his arms.

"And you knew it all the time," he murmured reproachfully.

"What I want to know," said Marian, when she dared to look around from the window again, "is, how you knew he was my brother?"

"Oh, the Court has ways of finding out things," replied Her Royal Highness evasively. "After the concert that day, I had inquiries made," she admitted. "Then—Marian's correspondence told the rest."

"And you intended all the time to marry me? You loved me from the beginning?" cried Bretherton rapturously.

"Who has loved that loved not at first sight?" answered Her Royal Highness, archly.





HIRTEEN—Red: A
Mexican Gambler's Story, by
Ellen E. H. Wildman. Illus-
trations by Bessie Collins Pease*



“**S** EÑORS, your wagers.”
The sallow-faced tailleur, sitting impassive at the green-covered table, raised his hand and with a touch set the wooden wheel whirling. A turn of his wrist, and the ivory ball went spinning in a contrary direction around the revolving disk.

Then he quickly replaced the cover.

*Written for Short Stories.

The smoky, ill-smelling lamps, placed at irregular intervals along the walls, but dimly lighted the small room. A thick blue haze of cigar smoke half obscured the group at the roulette table, absorbed in play.

Mariano Cayuba's little shop was about equally given up to trade and gambling.

By day it was a thriving mercantile establishment where Mariano dealt in a veritable chaos of goods: piles of native cloths, coarse blue cottons and bright-colored Bayeta de Castilla; hats made of palm-leaf ribs or soft vicuna wool; gayly-striped ponchos, blankets, beautifully tanned vicuna skins, boots and straw sandals; heaps of fruits and vegetables; pineapples, sour-sops, delicious green-skinned papayos, clusters of yucca roots as thick and long as a man's arm; and fat earthen jars of the inevitable chicha.

But when darkness fell, and the business of the day was done, it became a miniature Monte Carlo, where fortunes were staked on a turn of the flying wheel.

Night after night a motley company gathered around the long tables; Aymará Indians and mestizos; wealthy planters and ragged peons and a cosmopolitan sprinkling of foreigners.

Among them was a long, lank American, Herndon by name, agent for the great manufacturing company of "Barrows, Micklejohn & Co., Agricultural Implements, etc., etc., U. S. A.," and past master in the arts of the salesman.

Sometimes there foregathered with them a sandy-haired Scotchman, Angus McCulloch, whose long residence in the country had not yet modified his Scotch accent, and who was as canny in his betting as in his bargains.

There was also a handsome Bolivian, Don Leon de Carvalho, scion of an old, once wealthy, Hispano-American family, who was as punctual in his appearance at Cayuba's little shop as the nightfall.

Again the *tailleur* spoke, his voice as expressionless as his face:

"Señors, your wagers."

There was a quick interchange of bets. The muffled hum of the wheel under its cover grew fainter and fainter; it ceased, and a soft thud announced that the ball had fallen.

The banker bent forward to lift the cover, but before his fingers reached the knob, the Bolivian, who had been watch-

ing the game with but languid interest, apparently, hastily started forward and cried:

"Thirteen—red! Señors, name your wagers."

A short pause ensued, and some of the older habitués of the place glanced doubtfully at him.

Then the betting was resumed, de Carvalho quickly taking each wager offered. Once he turned interrogatively toward

the American, lounging in his chair at the opposite side of the table: "Señor Herndon—?"

Herndon shook his head, a gleam of curiosity in his half shut eyes.

"Not *this* time, Señor de Carvalho."

Catching the slight emphasis of Herndon's tone, de Carvalho darted a sharp look at him; but the American's face was as blank as that of the tailleur, who raised the cover and read in his monotonous tones:

"Thirteen—red, señors."

The Bolivian swept his winnings from the table.

"Thanks, gentlemen. And now your healths." He turned to the sleepy negro behind the bar: "Titto, you lazy rascal, wake and fill our glasses."

The chica swallowed, the crowd returned to their game; but Señor de Carvalho played no more, and soon left the shop, beckoning as he did so to his servant Pedro, who, all the evening, had sat, stolidly silent, on a bench near the door.

Pedro rose, wrapped his poncho closely about him, and slowly followed the Señor. On the threshold he started and turned quickly, with an intent look at the table. The banker was announcing the number:

"Thirteen—red, señors."

"McCulloch," said Herndon, as later they groped their way along the dark, lane-like street, stumbling occasionally over the cobble-stones which bordered each side of the foot-wide flagging serving as a sidewalk; "McCulloch, why does Señor de Carvalho always win when he plays thirteen—red?"



"Mon, that's the verra question a' was about tae ask, masel'," growled the Scotchman, discontentedly.

"And why," continued Herndon, "doesn't he play oftener? Sometimes he will stand about for a week without making a wager larger than five pesos, and then, all of a sudden, he places all he can get, but always on thirteen—red, and *always wins*. He must have made a tidy sum in the last few months. I've watched him like a hawk, but I never have seen a thing to indicate that he wasn't strictly square, nor have I ever heard anyone question his honor in any way. I have done considerable business with him, too; sold him several job-lots of machinery and never lost a cent, and I've a pretty big deal on hand now, with him."

"What is 't, Herndon?" saked McCulloch, interestedly.

"Oh, he wants some of these new-fangled contrivances for preparing maté. They're big, cast-iron pans, you know, to dry the leaves in. I'm to see him to-morrow and close the bargain. He seems all right, and I like him; but——what the devil is his little game?"

"Ask him," said McCulloch. "A've heard, though," he added drily, "that he's a verra good shot."

"Juana, mia, last night Señor Leon won again, and now——"

Pedro paused, glancing tentatively at the girl as she stood leaning against the great box in which was planted a tall oleander, one thick-set mass of delicate pink blossoms.

"Well?" She tossed her head carelessly, but the pink in her cheeks deepened a tint, as if a petal from the rosy blooms above her had floated down and lodged there, and her black eyes hid themselves for an instant behind their white lids.

"Well?"

"And now," continued Pedro, "I have saved two hundred and thirty pesos. Is it not enough, Juana, if you love me?"

His dark face glowed with the light of a passion which transformed his heavy features.

"No," said Juana impatiently, "no, not a peseta less than the five hundred pesos. How many times must I tell you that, Pedro? *Madre de Dios!* but you know it cannot be until then."

"My heart, why not?" persisted Pedro. "None of our people ever had so much. See then, there is Jua Prado; she did not make Luis wait so long."

"Surely," burst out Juana, scornfully, "she did not; and look at her now! Once she was the prettiest girl at all the fiestas, and the lightest-hearted. Now she is pale, and almost as wrinkled as old Benita, and Luis beats her, and drinks too much chica, and never brings home anything to her. No, no, Pedro, I will not do as Jua did!" And she stamped her little foot energetically on the brick pavement.

"Ah!" sighed Pedro, "but—"

"Juana!" called a soft voice from an inner room, and the girl vanished through the doorway.



Pedro settled back on his bench and fell to musing; but the brightness had died out of his face.

The little patio was flooded with sunshine. The patch of sky seen above its whitewashed walls was of deepest azure. The warm air was redolent with the heavy perfume of blossoming plants and shrubs disposed in large pots and boxes

around the sides of the court. Up one side, in green luxuriance, clambered a vine of "Inca's favorite," its heart-shaped leaves half hidden by the thick-crowding clusters of its crimson flower-bells. A splendid, blood-red orchid made vivid blotches of color against the wall. In the center of the court a tiny bronze fountain musically spouted out its cool waters. Here and there a door stood invitingly open, and, softened by distance, a low hum of voices lightly stirred the stillness.

The bell at the outer gate jangled.

Pedro rose and went leisurely down the corridor leading to the front entrance. Presently he returned, ushering in Herndon.

"The Señor de Carvalho, is he in?" inquired Herndon, his quick eyes taking in at a glance the pleasant scene before him.

"Don Leon is absent, Señor Herndon; he is at his hacienda to-day, but we expect him soon," replied Pedro, adding: "The Señora, his mother, is here and will be pleased to see you. Juana!" he called, "Show the señor in."

As Herndon's tall figure mounted the open stone stairway leading to the rooms above, and passed through the door of the family parlor, Pedro looked after him, half frowning, half puzzled:

"What does *he* want of Don Leon, I wonder?" he muttered.

He dropped lazily upon his bench, closed his eyes, and abandoned himself tranquilly to a siesta.

The Señora Mercedes de Carvalho sat in her balcony, slowly swaying back and forth in her easy chair. The balcony projected directly over the street. Its woodwork, hard, polished, dark with age, was wrought with the intricate designs of a long bygone time. The spaces between the pillars, where dark-eyed señoritas may have leaned and bent a willing ear to soft murmurs from below, were now fitted with sashes of small-paned, thick glass. The low, two-story house, with its walls of bamboo and adobe bricks, was old, very old. One of the pillars of the arcade below bore a date cut in the seventeenth century.

The open windows near which the Señora sat revealed picturesque vistas of white walls and red-tiled roofs scattered along the straggling street. The highway ended in the shady paths and park-like stretches of the alameda.

In the far distance, sharply outlined against the measureless blue of the tropic sky, rose the Andes, stupendous snow masses—inaccessible heights of arctic cold and solitude.

Doña Mercedes' parlor was an odd jumble of old furnishings and modern. Across one corner was slung an Indian hamac, woven of a reed-like wild grass; while in another stood a luxurious *fauteuil* of approved Parisian pattern. On the wall hung a cabinet crowded with the pieces of a costly antique service of solid silver. The carpet was a modern innovation of gaudy colors, but there were pretty curtains at the windows, while an inviting couch, and some old chairs, made of a fine-grained, lustrous native wood, their heavy



frames elaborately carved, added to the homelike look of the room. Upon the table, which was constructed of the same wood as the chairs, stood the customary equipage for serving maté—a tray of little, egg-shaped gourds and silver bombillas, with dishes for milk, sugar, and lemon-juice, and the urn for hot water. Each gourd (about as large as an orange) was pierced on top with a hole the size of a shilling piece, while its tapering end served as a handle for the unique and pretty cup.

Doña Mercedes rose as Herndon approached. The Señora was good to look at. Tall and stately, she held her fine figure youthfully erect. Her still black, glossy hair was put back from her face in thick braids; her dark eyes had kept the softly lambent glow of her girlhood, and a charming smile disclosed her perfect teeth.

She put out a small, white hand: "Ah, Señor Herndon, you are welcome. Pray seat yourself," and she waved him to a chair.

Herndon replied to her greeting, turned to the chair nearest him, and sat down.

There was a rending, splintering crash, a stifling cloud of woody dust, and Herndon measured his long length on the floor.

Señora Mercedes gave a musical shriek.

"Ah, Dios! Señor, you are hurt? Pedro! Ignacio, run, run! The Señor—"

But Herndon was on his feet, smiling unconcernedly as he brushed the dust from his clothes.

"It is nothing, Señora, nothing. Do not alarm yourself. But what have I done to your chair? It went down like a puff-ball."

He picked up a fragment and examined it carefully.

What had seemed a solid frame was but a thin shell. Through the wood ran countless branching channels, cut with almost mathematical precision in all directions, which had consumed the hard, woody fibre nearly to the surface. So thoroughly was it honeycombed that but a touch was needed to make it collapse.

"But what is it, Señora?" Herndon asked again, as he crumbled a piece of the broken carving in his fingers as if it had been a grain of cancha.

The servants had come running in at the Señora's call, and she bade them gather up the débris.

"What is it, do you ask, Señor Herndon?" she said, turning to him. "It must be the *teredo blanco*, I think. You see, Señor, in this country there is a most mischievous, small white worm that attacks our furniture, and even the wood-work of our houses, sometimes, and it eats and eats, oh, for many years, it may be, until, basta! your chair, your table, is a little heap of dust and splinters, as you have seen, Señor," she added, a half-amused smile lighting her face.

"But are you sure," she continued solicitously, "that you have received no injury? Let me give you a cup of maté Juana!" she called, "bring the hot water."

She hurried over to the table and picked up one of the small silver-mounted calabashes.

"Sugar, Señor, and milk? No?—the lemon juice, then? Ah, yes, that is right; it brings out the flavor so much better."

Into the gourd she poured a small quantity of hot water, put in the sugar and lemon juice, dropped in a generous pinch of the dried maté leaves; then, filling the cup to the brim with the steaming water, she offered it to him, with the long, odd-looking bombilla.

"Stir it well, Señor."

"Thanks, Señora," said Herndon, as he took the cup.

He stirred the tea slowly, examining with interest his bombilla. Its handle was a silver tube, richly chased its entire length. The bulb at the end (designed to keep back

the leaves while one drew up the tea through the hollow handle) was made of extremely fine silver wire, woven in a basket pattern.

He drew up a swallow of the strong, fragrant beverage.

"It is delicious, Señora. And what a beautiful bombilla! I have never before seen one of this pattern. Is it not an old one?"

"Yes," assented Doña Mercedes, pleased. "It is very old and an heirloom. We are of Spanish blood, and our family once had great wealth. These also are heirlooms, oh, so very, very old!" and she pointed to the silver service in the cabinet. "And the maté, is it not fine? It is from our own plantation, and Leon takes *such* pains with its cultivation."

She sighed gently. "He works so hard; always trying new ways of improving the maté; but the peons do not understand. They like the old ways best and they often trouble and hinder him. And then the new machinery! Saints help us! But it is dreadful how many pesos it costs. Still Leon says he *must* have it."

Herndon cast a conscious glance at her and fell to stirring his maté vigorously.

"That is true, Señora; but——" (his business instinct beginning to assert itself) "I assure you he is getting it at a bargain, a great bargain! and think of the gain in time and labor. Our machinery is guaranteed to save——"

"Ah yes, I know," broke in the Señora with a mellow laugh, "Leon has told me. Well, he hopes soon to sell the crop for a large sum, and then——"

She checked herself and looked at him. Something in his face reassured her.

"You see, Señor Herndon, when my husband died there was much trouble—a great debt, the estate deeply involved, and ever since Leon has been working, working to pay the debt and save our home. He is so honorable," she added proudly, "he will not rest until the last peseta is paid."

Herndon nodded sympathetically, draining the last drop of maté through his bombilla.

"Another cup, Señora, if you please."

The night was very dark. So was the long, gloomy street, lit only by an occasional lamp swinging before the closed door

of a shop, a gambling place, or the house of some government chargé d'affaires.

But dark as it was, two persons threaded their way down its black length with the certainty born of long familiarity.

"Step carefully, Don Leon; the stones are broken here. Caramba! what a night!"

"Patience, patience, Pedro! We are nearly there."

"Yes, and I pray the saints that they send us better luck than last time. I believe some one has cast the evil eye on us lately." And Pedro crossed himself repeatedly under his thick poncho; then, under his breath, swore a mouthful of high-sounding Spanish oaths as they paused at the door of Mariano Cayuba's small shop.

Inside it was as dingy and dark as ever. Behind the bar sat Mariano's fat wife, Leocadia, keeping a sharp eye on Tito, as he served her thirsty customers with *chica*. About the table, the same heterogeneous company watched, with eager eyes, the fateful turnings of the wooden wheel.

As they entered, Pedro dropped into his accustomed seat by the door, while Don Leon stepped up to the side of the table, glancing quickly around the circle of intent faces.

Herndon looked up, nodded, and motioned de Carvalho to a seat by his side, but the latter shook his head and remained standing.

The Bolivian was of a presence to arrest attention at once. He was tall and slender, but well built. The olive pallor of his face was intensified by his black hair and eyes—eyes like his mother's in color, but with a flashing gleam in their dark depths instead of the mild radiance of the Señora's melting orbs. A slight mustache fringed the fine curve of his firm lips, and his black goatee accentuated the long oval of his high-bred face. His expression was frank, but at the same time somewhat reserved, and his manners were those of the polished gentleman.

Around and around sped the wheel. The voice of the banker, calling the numbers and colors, droned through the hush that followed the betting.

Black—red—odd—even; and a fortune was won or lost.

The nervous little Frenchman sitting near the end of the table, made his wagers in a voice that shook in spite of his struggle to keep it steady. Next to him a peon watched the scanty wage for a whole year's drudgery melt away with the

flight of the fickle wheel, without the change of a muscle in his sullen, apathetic face.

The betting ran high. Large sums changed hands rapidly.

Don Leon watched the play for a while, but made no wager. At last he sat down a little behind the others.

Once Herndon glanced at him curiously, then turned to McCulloch, who sat at his right hand, and said something in a low tone. McCulloch nodded grimly, then fell to watching the Bolivian furtively.

"Señors, your wagers."

Once more the *tailleur* sent the great wheel and ivory ball spinning; then hid them under the cover.

The clamor of betting ceased. The wheel whirled madly; it slackened; slower—slower—more slowly yet, ran the circling rim. The ball fell; through the silence the sound of its falling echoed almost loudly.

The banker bent to raise the cover—Don Leon sprang from his chair with a bound.

"Thirteen—red! Señors, and the highest number that the house will register! Place your wagers, gentlemen, any or all of you. I will take them all."

His eyes flashed brightly; a suppressed excitement thrilled his voice as he spoke.

There was a moment's breathless pause as the banker again reached to lift the cover.

Somewhere in the distance sounded the faint, sweet tinkle of a mandolin. A passing wheel grated on the cobblestones, and even Herndon started. The careless laugh of some late returning merry-makers jarred painfully on tense-strung nerves.

Even the *tailleur* seemed impressed as he slowly lifted the cover. He might have been the presiding priest at some strange barbaric sacrifice, offered to appease angry gods, so solemn was his face.

"Black!"

Don Leon started; a dazed look crept into his eyes; he raised his hand with a commanding gesture:

"Read it again!"—his words were barely audible.

"Black."

His face went ashy white; he hesitated an instant, but when he spoke again his voice was clear and steady.

"Gentlemen, you shall all be paid. Buenas tardes, señors!"

He turned to the door.

"Come, Pedro."

Pedro was on his feet, staring at the table, his face ghastly, wild-eyed, terror-stricken.

"Don Leon—" he gasped.

"Hush, Pedro—come!"

The Señor waved him imperatively forward, and the two passed through the door into the darkness, which swallowed them as the sea swallows wrecks.

"McCulloch, I've found out why de Carvalho always used to win when he bet on 'thirteen—red'."

"Ay?" McCulloch eliminated all expression from his face.

"She told me the whole story—" Herndon shifted his position uneasily, and, with a gloomy air, pulled abstractedly at his cigar. "She says—"

"Wha's she?" queried McCulloch, with just a suspicion of interest in his voice.

"Why, Juana, the girl Pedro wanted to marry; the Señora de Carvalho's maid. I thought I told you. You see, Pedro let out the secret to her one day——" There was a long pause; McCulloch looked puzzled but waited. At last Herndon went on:

"Did you ever hear what sharp ears some of these peons have—so sharp that they can hear ordinary sounds a mile or more distant, or noises so faint and fine that most persons take no notice of them?"

"Ou, ay, but a'm not believing all that I hear," and McCulloch nodded emphatically.

"Well, it's true, for Juana says that Pedro could hear a difference between the falling of a pin and a needle. She told me——"

"Hoo cam' you to be speerin' at the lassie?" said McCulloch, severely.

"Why, you see, I went to the Señora's house to learn if there wasn't something I could do for them—de Carvalho's losses have nearly ruined them, you know." He added, musingly: "The Señora's a fine woman, a *very* fine woman——"

"Weel?"

"I did not see the Señora"—there was a note of regret in

Herndon's voice—"but I saw Juana and I asked her a few questions, and—"

"Mon, a'll warrant ye did!"

"This is what she told me: One night when in Cayuba's shop with Don Leon, Pedro heard the ball drop with a peculiar hollow sound, and, when the cover was raised, noticed the number and color.

"Happening into the shop next day, and being alone for a moment, he examined the wheel.

"He discovered a small hole in the wood. Sounding it with a straw, he found a hollow space under the compartment into which the ball had fallen the night before—the thirteen—red—and extending no further, apparently. He knew at once that it was the work of the little white worm they have down here which eats furniture and things—the *ter-teredo blanco*, that's it! Don't you remember what I told you about the Señora's chair?"

"Well, Pedro told Don Leon what he had chanced upon. You can guess the rest. All that de Carvalho had to do was to watch for Pedro's signal that the ball had fallen into thirteen—red, and wager accordingly. Fine plan, wasn't it?"

"Ay," assented McCulloch, stroking his grizzled beard thoughtfully, "ay, that *wes* a fine plan. But what went wrang wi' Pedro's ears that night?"

"Nothing. He heard the ball when it fell all right, *but* he forgot that if that infernal worm was still in the wheel *it would keep on boring!*"





NICETTE: The Story of a
Death Sentence. Translated
from the French, by Rachel
H. Stannard*



YOU are a dead man," said the doctor, looking fixedly at Anatole.

Anatole trembled.

He had come in all cheerfulness to spend the evening with his old friend, Doctor Bardais, the famous scholar whose works upon poisonous substances are known to everyone, but whose noble heart and paternal kindness were fully appreciated by Anatole alone. And now suddenly, without warning, without preparation, he heard from the revered authority this terrible prognostic.

"You unfortunate boy," continued the doctor, "what have you done?"

"Nothing that I know of," stammered Anatole, much agitated.

"Try to remember. Tell me what you have drunk—what you have eaten—what you have breathed."

The last word came like a ray of light to Anatole. That very morning he had received a letter from one of his friends who was traveling in India. In this letter was a flower which had been gathered by the traveler on the banks of the Ganges, a flower of peculiar shape and coloring, whose fragrance Anatole now remembered, had seemed to him strangely penetrating. He drew out his portfolio, and took from it the letter and flower, which he showed to the wise man.

"No more doubt!" cried the doctor. "It is the *Pyramensis Indica*! The deadly flower! The flower of blood!"

"Then you really believe——"

"Alas, I am only too sure!"

*Translated for Short Stories

"But it is impossible! I am only twenty-five years old. I am full of life and health."

"At what time did you open this fatal letter?"

"This morning at nine o'clock."

"To-morrow morning, then, at the same hour, at the same minute, in full health, as you say, you will feel a sharp pain at the heart, and all will be over."

"And you know of no remedy—no means of—"

"None," said the doctor.

And hiding his face in his hands, he fell into a chair, overpowered with grief.

Seeing the emotion of his old friend, Anatole understood that he was really fated. Out he rushed like a madman.

With burning temples, with ideas all upset, Anatole strode on mechanically, unconscious of what was going on around him, not even noticing that the night was far advanced and that the streets were becoming deserted. For a long time he rushed on thus, then, coming to a bench, he sat down.

It did him good to rest. Up to that time he had been like a man who had received a severe blow on the head; his stupor gave way now, and he began to collect his scattered ideas.

"I am in the position," thought he, "of a man sentenced to death, and even he can hope for a reprieve. By the way, how much longer have I to live?"

He looked at his watch.

"Three o'clock in the morning! It is time to go to bed. To bed! Give up the last six hours of my life to sleep? I can certainly do better than that; but what? Well, first, I have my will to make."

A restaurant which kept open all night was not far off. Anatole entered it.

"Waiter, a bottle of champagne and a bottle of ink."

He drank a glass of Cliquot and looked at the paper before him, meditating.

"To whom shall I leave my income of six thousand livres? My father and mother are no more—happily for them. And among the people who interest me I see only one—Nicette."

Nicette was a distant cousin, a charming girl of eighteen, with golden hair and large brown eyes. She was, like him, an orphan, and this common misfortune had long ago established between them a bond of silent sympathy.

His last wishes were soon set down; all to Nicette.

When that was done, he drank a second glass of champagne.

"Poor Nicette," thought he. "She was very low-spirited the last time I saw her. Her guardian, who knows about nothing in the world except his wind instruments at the conservatory, has promised her hand to a brutal fellow whom she hates the sight of. She detests him all the more because she loves another, if I understood her shy and faltering confessions. Who is that happy mortal? I do not know; but he must certainly be worthy of her, since she has chosen him.

"Good, gentle, beautiful, loving Nicette deserves an ideal husband. Oh! she is just the kind of a wife I should have wished for, if— It is infamous to force her to ruin her life by giving such a treasure to a brute! Why should not I be her knight errant? It shall be done, to-morrow morning. But no, to-morrow will be too late, it is now that I must act. It is rather an unsuitable hour for seeing people; but when I think that I shall be dead in five hours, it is little I care for the proprieties. Come then! My life for Nicette!"

It was four o'clock in the morning when Anatole knocked at the door of Nicette's guardian. Monsieur Bouvard himself, much startled, came down in his night-cap to open the door.

"Is the house on fire?"

"No, my dear Monsieur Bouvard," replied Anatole. "I came to make you a little call."

"At this hour?"

"Any hour will do for me to see you, but you are but scantily dressed, Monsieur Bouvard. Go back to bed."

"That is what I am doing. But, sir, you must have something very important to say to me, that you disturb me in this manner."

"Something very important indeed! Monsieur Bouvard, you must give up the match between my cousin Nicette and Monsieur Capdenac."

"Never, sir! Never!"

"You should not say either *never* or *always*."

"Sir, my mind is quite made up. This marriage will take place."

"It will not take place."

"We will see about that. And now that you know my answer, I will not detain you longer."

"That is not very polite on your part, but I am good-hearted as well as persistent, Monsieur Bouvard; I shall take no notice of your discourtesy, but shall remain."

"Remain if you like, but I shall consider that you have gone, and shall hold no more conversation with you."

And Monsieur Bouvard turned his face to the wall, muttering.

"Did anyone ever see the like? The idea of disturbing a peaceable man, of rousing him from his sleep, for such a piece of nonsense!"

Suddenly Monsieur Bouvard leaped from his bed.

Anatole had taken up the professor's trombone, into which he was blowing like a deaf man, pushing the grooves with all his force. Diabolical sounds were coming from the instrument.

"That is my best trombone! Presented by my pupils! Put down that instrument, sir!"

"Sir," answered Anatole, "you regard me as having gone away; I regard you as absent, and I am amusing myself while awaiting your return. *Couac! Couac!* Oh! what sweet music!"

"But I shall be turned out of the house if you keep on! My landlord will not tolerate the trombone after midnight."

"Then he certainly does not love music. *Frrout, frrout, prra!*"

"Oh stop! Pray stop!"

"Do you consent, then?"

"To what?"

"To give up this project of marriage."

"But, sir, I cannot."

"All right. *Couac!*"

"Monsieur Capdenac is a terrible man! If I insult him in such a manner he will kill me."

"And you hesitate for such a reason?"

"Good reason enough, I should think."

"In that case, leave the matter to me. Only swear to me that if I obtain Monsieur Capdenac's withdrawal, my cousin shall be free."

"Yes, she shall be free."

"Hurrah! I have your promise, remember. You will now

allow me to depart. By the way, where does your Capdenac live?"

"No. 100, Rue des Deux-Epées."

"I shall go there at once. Good-bye."

"My young friend," thought Bouvard, "you will find yourself in the jaws of a lion, and you will get the lesson you well deserve."

Meanwhile Anatole hastened to the address given him. When he arrived, it was about six o'clock in the morning.

"Who is there?" called a gruff voice, in answer to Anatole's ring.

"Open at once. An important message from Monsieur Bouvard.

The clank of a heavy chain became audible, then the rattle of a key, which unfastened three locks in succession.

"This man shuts himself up well," thought Anatole.

At last the door opened, and Anatole found himself in the presence of a man with fierce whiskers, wearing in lieu of night-clothes, a complete fencing costume.

"Always ready, you see. That is my motto."

The walls of the vestibule were hidden behind suits of armor. The little parlor into which Capdenac ushered his guest contained nothing but arms, poisoned arrows, guns, sabres, swords, pistols, a veritable arsenal. It was enough to strike terror into the breast of a timid person.

"Pshaw!" thought Anatole, "what do I risk now? Two hours and a half at most. Now then! Sir, you wish to marry Mademoiselle Nicette?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sir, you shall not marry her."

"Eh! Thunder and lightning! Who will prevent me?"

"I will."

Capdenac looked at Anatole, who was not a large man, but who looked very determined.

"Ah, young man," said he at last, "you are fortunate to come upon me when I am in a good humor. Take advantage of it. Do you know that I have fought twenty duels, and that I have had the misfortune to kill five of my opponents, and to wound the fifteen others? Come! I take pity on your youth. Once more, give up this mad project and retire."

"I see," replied Anatole, "that you are a fit adversary for me, and my desire to try my strength against so redoubtable

a man is increasing. Come! Shall we take the two swords on the mantel? or those two battle-axes? or these cavalry sabres! or—but why do you not decide? What are you thinking of?”

“I am thinking of your mother, and of the sorrow which awaits her.”

“I have no mother. Do you prefer the rifle, the pistol, or the revolver?”

“Young man, do not trifle with fire-arms.”

“Are you afraid? You are trembling.”

“Trembling? I? It is the cold that makes me.”

“Then either fight or give up Nicette.”

“I like your bravery. The brave should understand each other. Shall I tell you a secret?”

“Go on.”

“For some time, I myself have thought of breaking this engagement, but I did not know how to go to work to do so. Therefore I would willingly accede to your wishes, but you see that I, Capdenac, must not appear to yield to threats. Now you have threatened me, you know.”

“I withdraw my threats.”

“Then it is settled.”

“Will you write and sign your withdrawal?”

“I have so much sympathy with you, that I can refuse you nothing.”

Armed with the precious paper, Anatole rushed back to Monsieur Bouvard, at whose door he knocked at about eight o'clock in the morning.

“Who is there?”

“Anatole.”

“Go to bed,” cried the professor, in a rage.

“I have Capdenac's withdrawal. Open the door or I will break it in!”

Monsieur Bouvard opened. Anatole gave him the paper, then rushed to the door of Nicette's room, and called.

“Cousin, dress quickly and come down.”

In a short time Nicette, fresh as the morning, entered the little parlor.

“What is the matter?”

“Your cousin is crazy,” said Monsieur Bouvard. “That's what's the matter.”

"Crazy?" repeated Anatole. "Very well; but Nicette will allow that there is method in my madness. This night, my dear little cousin, I have succeeded in obtaining two things; Monsieur Capdenac gives up his claim to your hand, and your good guardian consents to your marrying the man of your choice."

"O guardian, are you really willing that I should marry Anatole?"

"What!" exclaimed Anatole.

"Since it is you whom I love, my cousin."

At this moment, Anatole felt his heart beating wildly. Was it the pleasure which the unhopèd-for avowal of Nicette caused him? Was it the pain foretold by the doctor? Was it death?

"Unfortunate man that I am!" cried the poor fellow. "She loves me. I am within reach of perfect happiness, yet must die without attaining it."

Then, seizing Nicette's hands eagerly, he told her about it all; the letter received, the perfume inhaled, the prophecy of his old friend, the steps taken, the success obtained.

"And now," he concluded, "I am about to die."

"But that seems impossible," said Nicette. "That doctor must be mistaken. Who was it?"

"A man who is never mistaken, Nicette—Doctor Bardais."

"Bardais! Bardais!" exclaimed Bouvard, suddenly, with a burst of laughter. "Listen to what my newspaper says: 'The learned Doctor Bardais has been suddenly overcome by an attack of mental alienation. This trouble has taken a scientific form. The doctor, as is well known, has given special attention to poisonous substances. Now he believes that all the persons whom he meets are poisoned, and tries to convince them of it. He was taken at midnight to the home of Doctor Blanche.'"

"Nicette!"

"Anatole!"

The two young people fell into each other's arms.





QUESTION of Obligations: A Tale of the Spanish-American War, by Clifford Mills*



"**A**ND this is—Spain! "There was a note of delight, almost rapture, in the girl's voice, as she waved her riding-whip, indicating the line of purple hills that marked the horizon. Beneath her lay a deep valley, across which a roughly-hewn roadway ran, losing itself in the shadowy woods which bordered it on either side. Far away on the left was the sea, rolling broad blue waves on golden sands.

"Yes—this is Spain." The words were identical, and yet at sound of them the girl turned quickly and looked inquiringly at the speaker. He was a typical Anglo-Saxon, long-limbed, broad-shouldered, close shaven, faultlessly attired in a well-fitting riding suit. He sat his horse with the ease of one long accustomed to the saddle, and his keen blue eyes glanced searchingly to right and left of him, as he and his companion rode slowly down to the valley below.

The girl at his side also bore unmistakable evidence of her nationality. She was slender almost to angularity, with a clear, fresh complexion and straw-colored hair done anyhow. Her nose was tip-tilted, and there was a touch of pride in the pose of her head, and in the glance of the wide-open gray eyes that looked out from beneath the boyish straw hat she wore. Her cotton skirt, stiff collar, and manish tie suggested maybe too close a following after masculine attire. But Miss Chichester was still in her teens, and as yet had not learned the rudiments of the pleasing art of dressing well.

"You hate Spain!" she cried, reproachfully, speaking her thoughts with the indiscretion of youth.

The man started and turned, the shadows that had gathered

***From Temple Bar.**

about his eyes and mouth dispersing as he looked at her. The girl's frank manner and her downrightness had interested him from the first moment of their acquaintance. "If you say so," he laughed.

"Oh, but I know!" she answered; with her most supercilious air; "there was hatred and all uncharitableness in the way you said *Spain!*"

"Well?" The man's amused glance was upon her glowing young face.

"Oh, well, I think it rather horrid of you; one does feel like that," she added, with quick apology in her tone, "when something bright and beautiful is despised." She was not, however, thinking of Spain, but of the Countess, the sad, beautiful Spanish Countess, who only last evening had confided to her, as they walked in the hotel garden at Gibraltar, her passion for this man at her side. And now, when beyond all expectation, she had, in compliance with the Countess' suggestion, induced this reluctant lover to accompany her to the place named by the Countess, the latter, coquetting with fate, was already five minutes behind the time arranged by her for the rendezvous.

It was too vexatious; suppose her brother and the rest of the party that had started earlier that morning should appear on the scene, and the Countess lose this last opportunity of a reconciliation!

She only half caught the indignant outburst that her remark had called forth from her companion. "Of course," she answered, abstractedly, her eye searching the road to the left along which the tardy lady had planned to appear, "they *are* bigots; one can't quite forget the Inquisition, and then there is this war with America; I am afraid I don't know much about it, or quite why they are fighting, but I have been told it is not exactly bliss to be under Spanish rule. One can't doubt America is right, but," she added, persuasively, "that does not prevent individual Spaniards from being the most delightful of people. Don't you agree? Ah, well, you do not know General Cardona. He dined with us last night at the hotel. My brother wanted to introduce you, but you were not to be found. Well, he is just charming, such perfect manners, and the best of patriots. He has lost his right arm, you know, and so is not able to go to the front. They have given him the command of the station here, but oh! how he

longs to serve his country more actively. I wish you could have heard him talk last night."

Her companion did not reply, and neither his silence nor the sternness of his profile could be described as encouraging. But Miss Chichester, once embarked on an enterprise, was not easily daunted. It was so like an injured lover, she told herself, to ape disregard to all that appertained to his late passion. If only the Countess would come, and this miserable misunderstanding be set right by her timely intervention; it would be enchanting to remember in after years the part she had played in so romantic a love affair.

"You leave Gibraltar to-morrow?" she said, speaking haphazard to gain time; for, despite his politeness, there was no mistaking her companion's apparent desire to be moving homewards.

"Yes."

The undoubted satisfaction in the tone of his reply made her heart sink; what if after all he did not love the Countess? But there was a sound along the road at last, and her field-glasses flew to her eyes.

"Miss Chichester, I think, if you do not mind"—he was turning his horse's head.

Miss Chichester put down her glasses. "Oh, just one moment!" she cried. "You have been so kind. I shall always remember that but for you I should have missed this delightful ride, and perhaps, who knows, never set foot in Spain. It was too stupid of my brother to start without me, when he knew how I was longing to say I had been in this dear romantic country of strict duennas and grave grandees. You know our yacht leaves Gib. to-morrow early, and there is no plan for our returning here. But that is just like a brother, is it not? He has seen Gib., and that's enough. And I suppose it is interesting, with all these fortifications, and it is nice to think it belongs to England, is the key of the Mediterranean, and all that. But oh, it *is* ugly—and the glare! Ah, now, now this is heaven. Look at those trees at the side there, did you ever see such green, leafy shade, and the stream that gleams like silver through them. Oh! you must own it is beautiful?"

"It is a tight place." He spoke with a short reckless laugh, and something in the alert way he glanced around the little valley struck the girl.

"Do you know," she said candidly, "if I had not known you to be an artist, I should have taken you for a soldier."

"Indeed?" he had bent his brows, and was scanning the dense cover of the woods opposite.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, hastily, "I ought not to make personal remarks. It is a fault of mine that time, I hope, will correct." Why did not the Countess come? What could have detained her?

"Jove!" The exclamation burst suddenly from her companion, and the girl, turning, found him bending forward in a listening attitude.

"Not—not—brigands?" she gasped, white-lipped; she had heard the tradition of the place, and a small party of men had appeared on the crest of the hill.

But the next moment she saw they were soldiers, and that they were coming quickly towards them. Her exclamations of relief were cut short as she caught sight of her companion. He still sat erect in the saddle, and was carelessly adjusting the right lappet of his coat, but his face was set and had whitened.

Miss Chichester tossed her head. "A coward!" and she had thought so well of him. Suppose these had been brigands? Perhaps, after all, the Countess would be lucky if she missed her chance.

Another second, and the soldiers had come up to them, and their officer was bowing before her.

"Señorita," he said, "I implore that you feel no alarm; it is my painful duty to arrest your companion, who is a spy, an American in the pay of his Majesty's enemies."

Miss Chichester gasped a little. "It's not him," she cried in ungrammatical haste, "you are making a mistake; we know him—my brother, Sir George Chichester, and I—he is an artist—a friend of ours." And then it struck her suddenly how little she did know of her companion, and she turned her face, from which the color had flown, and looked at him.

He met her gaze steadily. "It is just a mistake," he said, carelessly, answering the question in her eyes.

The Spanish officer bowed courteously, but there was, the girl thought, menace in his glance. "That may be," he admitted politely; "it has, however, to be proved."

Miss Chichester's heart beat uneasily, for they were in Spain, and to be there during the war with America with even a supposed American as one's sole companion, was to court

possible difficulty. She was remembering, too, as one does in supreme moments, many a tale of Spanish cruelty and injustice, to which she had listened with indifferent interest; but she checked such thoughts.

"You see," she cried, with a smile—and though Miss Chichester had but just left the schoolroom, she knew how to smile—"this gentleman, who is a great friend of mine" (she felt that under the circumstance the adjective was pardonable), "very kindly offered to be my escort this morning. It is horribly vexatious that through me he should be placed in such an annoying position."

"I assure you, Miss Chichester—" her companion began loftily, when she cut him short.

"Why, the Countess!" she cried. "Of course, how stupid I am, she can put it all right. The Countess Varene, you know her by name, at least. She knows this gentleman well; if you will wait a moment she will be here. In fact, only last night she arranged with me to meet us at this very spot." Mr. Halsford started, and a queer smile wreathed his lips.

The Spanish officer raised his head and was looking straight into Miss Chichester's eager face. "I do not think," he said in deliberate tones, "that the Countess intends to keep the rendezvous."

"You mean?" Miss Chichester cried, her eyes holding his questioningly; and then instinct told her what the admission concealed; the color flew to her cheeks, and she laughed, but it was not the laugh of the schoolgirl, for no one likes to be used as a catspaw, and to have one's first dear romance end in an intrigue in which one has played the fool, is a hard awakening from girlish illusions.

"I see," she cried scornfully, "this is the Countess's doing, it was revenge, then, she wanted, and I—" she stopped short. "What a fool I have been!" she thought, despairingly.

The Spanish officer was smiling reassuringly into her troubled face. "The *Señorita* need feel no alarm," he said kindly; "I shall be delighted to provide her with an escort that will see her safely to Gibraltar before gun fire; as for the *Señor*"—he bowed stiffly to Mr. Halsford—"he remains my prisoner."

Miss Chichester jumped from her horse and faced him, breathless with indignation. "You can't mean it!" she gasped; "why, you must see that all this is mere foolery?"

The Spaniard bowed. "I think," Miss Chichester cried, turning to Mr. Halsford, desperation in her eyes, "that you might do more than look like a Christian martyr."

"I was thinking," Mr. Halsford remarked quietly, "that it might be as well if you accept this offer of an escort."

"That's nice!" she cried, bristling, her head in the air. "I get you into this scrape by being a fool, and then I am expected to slope off like a sneak and leave you in the lurch!"

"Understand, please," she said, addressing the Spanish officer with the air of a tragedy queen, "that I shall accompany this gentleman."

The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"The Señorita gives herself unnecessary annoyance," he replied, as he turned to give directions to his men.

"I wish," Mr. Halsford said, some moments later, when he and Miss Chichester were walking side by side along the road, guarded by the soldier who was leading the horses they had lately ridden, "that you would think better of it and go back; it is only fair to warn you that there is danger in the affair. Suppose it is proved that I come from New York?"

"What nonsense!" Miss Chichester began, and then something in his eyes stopped her; "it is possible—it might be proved," she faltered. "Oh, then that makes it all the more necessary that I should stay," and she tossed the limp fringe that trailed untidily across her brows, and met his glance defiantly. "We can fight it out together."

"England," said Mr. Halsford, watching her with a queer little gleam in his eyes, "is bound over in this affair to strict neutrality."

"Pooh!" Miss Chichester cried, her nose in the air, "it's a sheer insult to Runnymede; one can't rub out the beginning of things, you know."

"In time of war, they have," Mr. Halsford said, "summary measures of dealing with persons suspected as spies."

Miss Chichester's eyes widened suddenly. "I have read," she said, with an assumed carelessness that did not in the least deceive her listener, "that—that they don't mince matters. But the newspapers always pile up the agony, don't they?" She strove to smile, but felt her lips tremble.

"Nevertheless," Mr. Halsford said, looking straight in front of him, as if he saw more than the dusty road and the distant hills ahead. "Suppose, for example, that the worst is proved

against me?" Miss Chichester gave an impatient little snort—"And that my case is dealt with after this summary fashion described in the newspapers you refer to. I want you to promise me that you will let a girl in New York know just how this all happened, and send her the ring that you will find tied round my neck. I would give it you now, but we are watched.

Miss Chichester's sob was audible. "They will never dare!" she cried, in desperate impotence.

Mr. Halsford smiled grimly. "Shall I tell you the name and address now?" he asked.

Miss Chichester made a mental grasp at calmness, and repeated his directions in a low voice, tense with suppressed feeling. "I shall not forget," she said, meeting the anxious inquiry of his eyes; "whatever happens, please remember I shall not forget."

In the ensuing silence her thoughts ran on irrelevantly. "I won't believe it!" she assured herself; "nothing so dreadful could happen. But if—if it does, it will be all my fault! He did not want to come with me this morning, nothing but sheer politeness made him do it. I just drove him into a corner, and he would have been a cad had he refused. Oh, that Countess! A political spy, of course, and that love-story was all a lie; what a fool I have been! If only I had had even the smallest suspicion that he was an American! That poor, poor girl in New York! How could I ever send her the ring. I, who have led him into this death-trap! I couldn't—I couldn't. No, if they shoot him, they shall shoot me, too—I'll insist, I'll say I also am a spy, an American. What would be the use of living with a thing like this on one's conscience? But he must not die—he shall not. Oh! why was I not born clever, if fate was to lead me into such a maze as this? But clever or not, if he dies, I do! All is fair in love and war—I will swear anything—everything."

Her eyes sought her companion's face, and her heart sank. "He will be the difficulty," she thought, with despair. "He'll not stoop to compromise; one can read it in his face. He will be just mulish in his honesty, and count his life a mere rush-light compared to what he pleases to call his honor. Oh, that poor girl in New York!" She tramped on hopelessly for a time, a picture of dejection, her mind a desert in which despair reigned.

Presently she started and looked up. "If only I dare!" she thought, and she turned and confronted her companion with flushed cheeks and glowing eyes. "I hate would-be martyrs," she said, "obstinate martyrs who contrive to get killed unnecessarily while aiming at self-glorification! I don't see that the prestige of America will be raised by your being shot out here in the woods. If you are going to die without making an effort to save yourself, I call it mere selfish indulgence of national pride."

Mr. Halsford smiled despite himself. "You are severe," he said; "but let me assure you I have no particular craving for unnecessary martyrdom."

"I suppose," Miss Chichester said, ignoring his assertion, "that you have heard it said that all is fair in love and war?"

Mr. Halsford did not reply.

Miss Chichester's eyes flashed. "It might, of course, interfere with your wish for martyrdom to take full advantage of the saying," she remarked with some scorn; and then she uttered a cry of delight, for she had caught sight of a horseman coming up the dusty road towards them. "General Cardona!" she exclaimed, and the next moment he was alongside the group, amazement on every feature, as he recognized the sister of his host of last night in such a plight.

But Miss Chichester, smiling her sweetest, had forced her way to his side. "To think," she exclaimed, "that *you* should come to my rescue, and that your dear delightful Spain is so tiresome a country to travel in! Oh! it is not the fault of your gallant soldiers," for the General had turned sharply for explanation to the officer in charge. "They are acting on information received from that quite too patriotic Countess Varena." Miss Chichester's Spanish was not a strong point but she thought she caught the words "meddlesome woman" as they fell from the General's lips.

"Yes, the Countess Varena," she continued; "it was by her appointment we came here this morning. She has somehow conceived the notion—it is really too absurd—that this gentleman"—she indicated Mr. Halsford—"is an American—a spy. I suppose," Miss Chichester said, she was blushing furiously now, "I suppose the fact of his being—my—my *fiancé*, will set that doubt at rest."

Mr. Halsford made a sudden step forward. Miss Chichester could feel the glance he threw at her, though her eyes were

discreetly downcast. "It's another corner," she was telling her trembling self; "he can't give me away—thank God—thank God!"

But she could hear her heart beat in the silence that followed.

"I should, however, prefer that the fact did not interfere with the present difficulty," Mr. Halsford said, addressing General Cardona; and his tone was cold, Miss Chichester thought, even to insolence. "I am quite prepared to stand my chance of investigation."

"Oh! of course—darling!" Miss Chichester cried, shrilly, losing embarrassment in fear, and feeling that she might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb. "You being a man would prefer to go through with it rather than lose the excitement. I dare say you would even rather be shot than miss your chance of posing as so interesting an individual as an American spy. But"—she was looking into his indignant face with an outrageous coquetry new-born for the emergency—"there are other people to be considered, you know—there is the girl—I mean, there is—me!"

General Cardona, looking on, felt that he had come across a very interesting romance. He was, he said, distressed beyond measure that a silly woman's meddling had produced such a *contretemps*—he would himself call on Sir George and apologize. He begged to be allowed to offer his congratulations, and trusted that this unfortunate little episode might be the only cloud that would mar the bright sky of their felicity. Fortunately he was in command, and could prevent the matter going further; he implored them to be quite reassured on that point, and turning to his officer he commanded him to at once withdraw with his men.

Mr. Halsford had relapsed into a dogged silence; his brows were knit angrily, his mouth was stern.

Miss Chichester's heart sank as she observed him. "He will despise me forever," she thought, "for a forward, hateful minx, but what does it matter—I don't count. He must get out of this affair somehow, and it is certain that the more fibs I tell the harder it will be for him to speak the truth." She told them unsparingly, with apparent ease and cleverness. Peril is the forcing-bed of humanity, but Mr. Halsford, looking on, compelled to silence, if not to acquiescence in her scheme, remembered with some regret the honest little schoolgirl he

had thought her. His half-hearted assurances of good faith would not have gone far. But Miss Chichester made up for all such shortcomings. "You can do that," she cried, eagerly turning to him, "you can promise General Cardona that your visit to Spain shall in no way injure her interest. That is easy enough, is it not?"

"Oh, quite!" Mr. Halsford answered, meeting her entreating eyes unflinchingly, but she noticed that he set his teeth as he spoke.

The General, also observing, thought him an ill-conditioned fellow, and pitied the girl, whom he found charming, for the choice she had made. He himself assisted her to remount, and watched the pair ride off. At the bend of the road the girl turned and waved her hand to him; and the General sighed as he rode homewards. It was ten thousand pities, he thought, that Sir George permitted the sacrifice, but then were not all Englishmen brutes?"

"I suppose," Mr. Halsford said, some moments later, when they had left danger and the hills behind them, "that I must now thank you for saving my life."

"Oh, pray don't mention it!" Miss Chichester cried hysterically. "I quite understand how thoroughly galling you must feel the whole situation. To lose the chance of serving your country even by dying in that cold-blooded higgledy-piggledy fashion is naturally annoying, and to lose this through a girl too, whom you scarcely know, a girl whose stupidity forces you into a dangerous position, and then tells wholesale lies to get you out of it, must make you feel disgusted. Please understand once and for all that I realize only too well that I am the one under the obligation."

"What nonsense," Mr. Halsford exclaimed. "You know I think nothing of the kind," but he still looked desperately angry.

Miss Chichester's face was very white. Her eyes lay in dark hollows beneath her drawn brows. Her hair trailed, a yellow strand, down her back. The spirit that had upheld her deserted her, and she felt horribly like crying.

Mr. Halsford rode at her side in silence; it was easy to see that his mind was much perturbed. His companion scanned his face wistfully from time to time. "I wish," she said presently, in disconsolate tones, "that you didn't feel so sick

about this—it is quite bad enough for one of us to bear a life-long remorse."

"You do not understand," Mr. Halsford answered, coming slowly out of the long thoughts that had held him; and then he sprang quickly from his horse, for Miss Chichester, with a low moan, suddenly lurched forward and slid in a limp heap from her saddle to the ground.

A few moments afterward she looked up at him from the rock against which he had propped her. "I fainted, didn't I? It's the first time," she gasped, forcing a smile, "it is awfully stupid of me. Please don't mind—but I must," and she dropped her face into her hands and sobbed quietly.

Mr. Halsford looked on with a face full of concern. "I am so sorry," he said. "I am no end of a brute, I know, but you must not think me ungrateful if at first I regretted the incident that robbed me of the gratification of taking this to New York." He had drawn a folded paper from beneath the lining of the lapet of his coat, and held it towards her.

Miss Chichester took it wonderingly. Her bewildered eyes looked for a moment uncomprehendingly at the plans and measurements traced thereon, and then suddenly the truth flashed upon her. "Oh!" she cried, and despite herself there was horror in her voice. "Then you were—you are——"

Mr. Halsford smiled grimly. "A spy—an American in the pay of his Majesty the King of Spain's enemies—it was all true, you see."

Miss Chichester rose suddenly, still very pale. "Let us go on," she said in a frightened voice, glancing round her, "you forget we are still—in Spain."

"There is something to be done," Mr. Halsford said, "before we go. You promised something concerning my visit to Spain—do you remember?"

Miss Chichester put one hand to her brow; she was holding the paper at arm's length with the other. "Yes," she said slowly, "I remember—but what do you mean?"

"That your word must be kept—the paper must be destroyed. I have a notion that its possession by the authorities of New York might not always be exactly harmless to Spain."

Miss Chichester gave a gasp. "But you?" she cried. "To destroy it after all the risk, the trouble—and danger!"

"I must confess," Mr. Halsford remarked, as he took the

paper from her hand, "that the price you offered for my immediate release seemed for the moment somewhat inadequate."

Miss Chichester's head drooped. "I am sorry," she said, dubiously, "but the girl—the girl in New York—what will she say?"

"The girl in New York," Mr. Halsford answered, as he tore the paper into tiny shreds, "having the very questionable taste to prefer my personal safety to anything on this planet, will agree with you."

Miss Chichester smiled through her tears. "I am glad of that," she said; "perhaps *because* of that you may in the future come to forgive my meddling."

Mr. Halsford took the hand she had extended. It was cold and trembled a little, so maybe it was partly for this reason that he held it in both his own, in a grasp that was long and kindly. "In the future," he said, meeting her supplicating eyes, while his own twinkled into a smile, "America will be bound to admit, as she does now, that in this particular instance England has not behaved in a strictly neutral manner."





HE Soul of Judas: An Escaped Convict's Story, by Helen Sterling Thomas*

TONIO was small and clever, agile as a street cat and much in demand in all miserable professions. With the versatility of genius he followed first one lawless pursuit, then another, and succeeded because he cared much for the excitement of the game. little for the result.

He had been one of the smugglers along the coast at one time; again he had followed the trail of the gypsies among the hills; once he held a stiletto and waited on the dark road. to Trivoli and came away with ill-gained spoils. He had loitered near the booths at street fairs and learned to do tricks with cards and tell fortunes. In the taverns there was always some one to throw a copper or give him a glass of wine. True, it was sometimes cold in winter, but spring came early; his stomach could gnaw painfully, but his wits were sharper than the baker's eyes. He had never suffered long. He bore his questionable life lightly, meeting danger with a smile, happy with a handful of chestnuts or an old cigarette. He had friends without number. He would have given his last soldo or drawn his knife in aid of one of them. It was often said that those who had done an evil turn to Tonio had best make peace or never meet him again.

He had failed but once. It had gone sadly for him then, however, for he had lost his freedom in the affair about the jewels at the villa in the hills. His comrades had deserted him at the critical moment, and escaping with the plunder left him where he had been captured. He had been taken back to town and sent to the prison outside the ramparts. There they shaved his head, gave him striped clothes and a ball and chain to wear. These indignities hurt his vanity cruelly. He missed the freedom of the streets, the gaiety

*Written for Short Stories.

of the wine shops; here all days were alike, and he found neither pleasures nor friends. He grew dull and sullen under prison life, did his share of labor mechanically as though insensible to thought or feeling.

One morning as he worked on a new roadway among a dozen other criminals, the sun burned warm on his back and bare arms. A bird sang somewhere overhead, then he saw it wheel away northward and knew that spring had come. All at once his courage and spirit leaped into life. He glanced about. The overseer was passing leisurely to and fro, shouldering his gun. He also was feeling the spring sunshine according to his nature. It made him languid and somewhat lax in vigilance. The moment was one among a thousand. Tonio knew it. He grasped his pickax firmly; as the overseer passed he dealt a blow, quickly, unswervingly. The keeper fell heavily, the blood showing through his dark hair. Tonio wrenched a key from the man's belt, and with cunning fingers undid the ball and chain at his own ankle. His comrades stood in dazed silence watching his movements. Then some one gave the alarm. Tonio heard men crying in hoarse voices. A bullet whizzed past his cheek.

Once more he felt the exhilaration of danger. He ran with all his strength, still clutching the key. He leaped with great bounds across an open field and dashed into a little wood. His pursuers soon forced him from out the friendly shelter of the trees. He turned toward the town. There was a dwarf, one Giuseppe by name, not far away. He would help him could he reach there. He was quicker than those heavy fellows from the prison. But they pressed him hard. The dogs! He had not run like this for months. His breath was shortening. He managed to gain the outskirts of the town and dodged into a quiet alley. He could go no further. He was lost unless he could find shelter. High walls rose on either hand. He placed his foot in a crevice of the crumbling stone. Would it hold? His hands clasped the top. He dragged himself over and fell bruised and breathless on the other side. Some thick bushes screened him, and he lay still and listened to the noise of his pursuers passing quickly in the street beyond. As these sounds faded away he gained breath and looked about.

"Body of Satan!" thought Tonio, "'tis the monastery!"

The Brothers had not forgotten how he stole their pome-

granates last year. Trust them. They would be the first to hand him over to the police. But they were slow and sleepy fellows. After all, this was not a bad place to hide. If only he had a knife in his hand he could manage. He could creep into the cathedral through the garden. If he could get a crust to eat he could lie quiet in some dark corner of the church, no one would be the wiser. There must be the blessed bread and wine in the sacristy. His soul shrank from the thought of touching it, but he was cruelly hungry. He would make the sign of the cross before he ate and no harm could come then. In a few days the excitement of his escape would be forgotten, he could make his way toward the coast. Ships were lifting anchor there at all times; once across the sea he could be free and happy.

Suddenly a bell rang from the tower at the end of the garden. Tonio heard footsteps and voices; he shrank back against the wall and peered cautiously through a mass of leaves. He saw a line of brown-robed Brothers descend the church steps; each one reverently crossed himself, then proceeded across the garden. As some paused to examine the fruit trees and vines, Tonio held his breath. But at last all left the garden, except one monk and a small boy, who paused so near that Tonio could have stretched out his hand and touched them.

The spring sunshine blazed steadily down upon Angelo and Brother Antonio. They began weeding industriously, both unconscious of Tonio. Brother Antonio had a face like the St. Francis in the fresco on the chapel wall. Angelo loved him because he made music on the great organ while Angelo sang at mass, and because the Brother told him stories of the Holy Virgin and the good apostles. Angelo gazed toward the intense blue sky, wishing that to-day he might see the Blessed Lady crowned with roses, holding in her arms the little Jesus or St. John. St. Peter, carrying the key of heaven, or St. Francis with his pierced hands, were vivid and real to Angelo. When the harvest failed and the hungry poor swarmed at the refectory door, he remembered the miraculous feeding of the multitude. He fancied that the Brothers were St. Philip or St. James, dispensing loaves and fishes. It would have surprised him little at any moment to see Brother Antonio or even the stout Abbot carried up to heaven over the roofs and spires of the cathedral.

Angelo had come to the monastery from outside the town, where the gardens stretched away in green rows, and the goats' bells sounded on the hills. It was a country of white roads, flat-roofed houses, baked yellow in the sunlight, hard-working people, and children that grew strong with little care. His mother and father toiled in the open the week through, went to mass on Sunday, and sat under the grape arbor in the evening discussing the business of the farm with other honest countrymen. Natoni, from across the way, was getting old. He needed a boy to drive his cart on market days, to help sell the vegetables, and to mind the horse all through the hot afternoon, while he drank sour wine under an awning on the Piazza. The father considered. It was time Angelo did something beside lie in the sunshine on the doorstep, and sing to Liza, the little sister. He should go with Natoni and bring home a few soldi. So one day, in the faint light of early morning, Angelo sat in the market cart with the old man. As they jogged slowly on, Angelo saw the roadway winding white and tempting before his eyes. He thought of the city lying at the other end, the many towers and spires, the open squares, the great cathedral. Then he began to sing for very joy, a song which made the country people in the fields lift their heads and look wonderingly after the cart, a song which rang strong and free through the silent streets of the town.

Brother Antonio heard it, paused over his illuminating in the cloister, and crossing himself, murmured hastily:

"The Holy Mother has sent that voice to praise the Good God in the Gloria."

He threw aside his work and hurried down the street after the singing boy. Thus it happened that Angelo slept within the monastery walls that night, dreamed that he followed the goatherds again at home, and that the Virgin Mary came down from the sky and took him to the City of Paradise in Natoni's wagon. He learned to serve at Mass, to sing in the cathedral and to work in the garden beside Brother Antonio.

Time went on, and little Liza, the little sister, grew tall, and drove the father's cart to market; sometimes she stopped at the monastery gate, where Angelo came to kiss her and send greetings to the mother at home. There he whispered to Liza the strange tales he heard from the Brothers. The darkness of the homeward roadway became alive to her with visions of St. Peter and St. Paul, or a frightful devil with horns

and a red tongue, and she murmured for safety the prayer to the Guardian Angel.

This spring day was like many others within the monastery. The Brothers had arisen for prayers and confessions in the white light of dawn, Mass had been sung in the small hours, tasks and penances had been appointed, and now the sun was high and lay warm upon Angelo and Brother Antonio at work in the quiet garden. The flash of a lark's wing now and then cut the blue above their heads, the air was sweet with jasmine and orange flowers, and the almond trees turned faint pink blossoms toward the light wind. Angelo and Brother Antonio knew nothing of the uproar in the town over the escaped prisoner; they talked not of the things of the day, military or political, but of the dramas of saints and martyrs acted a thousand years ago. Angelo listened breathless to these wonderful stories, of which the Brother had no lack. The sensitive, lively imagination of this child appealed peculiarly to the monk. Into these tales Brother Antonio infused much of his own poetic personality, of which the barren, literal life within the cloister had never robbed him.

Angelo knew well the lives of St. Francis and the gentle Santa Clara; Brother Antonio had shown him the pictures of the brave St. Stephen being stoned to death, of St. Sebastian shot full of arrows, St. Lawrence roasting on the fiery grid-iron. Tonio lying uneasy and cramped against the wall learned unwillingly the fables of the Church, and in his heart he cursed the saints.

To-day the Judas tree flushing crimson-purple blossoms against the monastery wall reminded Angelo of the unworthy Apostle, and he asked the Brother why this harmless tree bore the name of the wicked one.

"Listen well," said Brother Antonio, "and I will tell you the true story of the soul of Judas Iscariot."

Angelo crept nearer and paused at work.

"No, child, do not stop weeding. Let us be diligent to-day, so the Abbot will be pleased and grant us a longer time to practice the Easter songs. The weeds grow rank this weather, and, like our sins, outstrip our watchfulness.

"Long ago when the Lord Jesus played at St. Mary's knee, and later, when, a grown man, He walked the seacoast and called the chosen ones to Him, this same tree, now stained and purple, bloomed pure and white amid the Galilean hills. You

know, Angelo, the story of the wanderings of the Master, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, the agony on the cross. After the betrayal Judas found the price of blood too heavy. He was haunted by the horror of the cross, black against the sunset sky; by the torn veil of the temple; the crowds of frightened people; the pitiful face of the Mother Mary. He wandered disquiet and wretched awhile, and at last hanged himself upon the branches of this tree. His blood dyed the white blossoms, and from that day forth the poor tree blooms with stained flowers—a Judas tree indeed—an eternal reminder of the faithless Apostle. His blood still colors these blossoms; while his soul, not fit to enter Paradise, nor worthy to find its way there even through Purgatory, is doomed to roam upon this earth, repentant through a thousand years, forever seeking rest, forever pursued. Sometimes it is in one form, sometimes in another, condemned ever to seek for kindness in a form which must ever repel it. It is a restless soul in search of a peace it can never find. It is crushed and driven from all places, wailing in the night wind, crying desolate on the seacoast.”

“Is there no hope for Judas?” questioned Angelo in horror, “is there no door to Paradise that can at last be opened to receive him?”

The Brother answered in a voice clear and resonant, “His hope lies in the kindness of his fellow-men. For, Angelo, every gentle deed done to a repulsive and loathsome creature may unthinkingly be done unto this unhappy soul. When a cruel act is done to Judas Iscariot another hundred years is added to his punishment, but if any compassion or mercy be shown him, he may be pardoned and received into Paradise.

Then Angelo, puzzled, put this question: “How can I recognize this Judas, and therefore avoid doing him evil?”

“Only the Good God himself can distinguish between Judas Iscariot and better men or worse. Who can tell but at the last fatal Judgment Day He may find even that despised soul more sinned against than sinning? But if ever the Judas tree blooms in the spring, once more white and innocent as of old, it shall be taken as a sign that Judas Iscariot is pardoned for some kind deed shown him, and has entered into heaven with the saints, at rest and forgiven.”

Angelo reflected. He thought with sorrow of his unkind deeds. He shrank with loathing from the Judas tree. He

saw in excited imagination the limp figure swinging from its branches, blood surging from the mouth, dyeing the poor blossoms, branding them forever, a reminder to men of the uneasy soul of the faithless Apostle. Angelo remembered the crippled beggar with his lean dog, skulking at the refectory door; the poisonous snake, the sluggish lizard in the garden; old Dominico, down in the market place, cursing the passers-by, stealing lemons from the fruit venders; ugly, ragged Alessandro who came late to Mass and neglected the confessional; might not any one of these be Judas in disguise?

As they talked the shadows lengthened and the bell called for vespers. Angelo followed the Brothers into the church. He was still thinking of the strange story. All through the hymns and psalms that day, amid the music of the Magnificat and the Angelus Domini, he heard the sorrowful wail of the unhappy Judas. He pictured him at the gay Easter time, toiling, tired and hungry, through the town; or homeless on the hills in the winter's cold. From out the colored windows of the cathedral the faces of Archbishop and Apostle gazed at him with reproachful eyes. The deep voice of the priest at the altar, the murmured responses of the choir, surged louder and louder, and again sank away into a hopeless monotone. All this seemed to Angelo but a lamentation for the lost soul.

The service over, the Brothers and the people arose to leave. Angelo remained behind as usual, to close the doors and arrange the scattered sheets of music on the choir stalls. Two by two the Brothers departed; the last old woman, the last slow cripple passed out of the open door into the twilight. Angelo felt suddenly an overwhelming loneliness in the great church. The candles on the altar burned low and flared fitfully. One by one he put them out and closing the great doors shut out the daylight. The church, always large and empty, became desolate. The faithful little red lamp, burning before the Holy Eucharist, swayed uneasily on its slender chain, the wreath of paper roses around the picture of the Virgin rustled mysteriously. Angelo trembled. He heard a thousand noises in the stillness. What if the dreadful Judas should be hiding somewhere in the darkness, or beside him even at this moment! In his haste a book fell to the floor making a loud sound. To be alone to-day terrified him. He turned toward the sacristy door. Someone stood

there. The darkened church yawned behind him, before him was a man with piercing eyes, a great key clutched in his hand. Angelo stood quite still. The figure did not move.

"Gentle Mary, save me!" faltered poor Angelo. Then, perceiving the key in the man's hand, and falling on his knees, he cried aloud and gladly: "'Tis the good St. Peter carrying the key of heaven!"

"How if it were Judas with the key of hell?" said the man in a voice thick and frightful.

Angelo gasped.

Tonio had been many characters in his short life. It was a simple matter to him to change his name, and it tickled his fancy hugely to impersonate Judas. When he spoke again his eyes were not unkind, but to Angelo he was still a hideous figure.

"Listen, boy, and swear on the cross you will tell no one I came here, or I may carry you off with me to hell, where the mummeries they teach you here will not avail."

Angelo gasped and stood breathless in terror.

At that instant the ring of horses' hoofs in the street penetrated the stillness of the church. Loud blows were struck on the door and hoarse voices called for entrance. Tonio glanced about for escape. Angelo dared not stir. Thoughts ran swiftly through his mind: "They have come for the poor Judas to torment him. I must save him, Brother Antonio has said it."

Then to the man beside him: "Quick into the sacristy, put on a priest's cassock."

Tonio darted away. The noises outside grew louder. Men were shouting angrily now.

"Holy Mother, help me to save him!" murmured Angelo.

He hurried to the great door and tremblingly undid the unwieldy iron bolt. A group of noisy soldiers burst into the quiet church. Angelo fell back against a pillar, quivering with fright. With beating heart he watched. The men lost no time, but swarmed down the long nave and into the side chapels. Their heavy boots and steel spurs resounded on the stone pavement. Their harsh voices awoke untuneful echoes beneath the pointed arches. Angelo's excited eyes followed their movements. There seemed to be hundreds of them in the twilight of the cathedral. They vanished in the distant shadows, then suddenly reappeared beside him

as though by magic. One of them tore aside the curtains of the confessionals, another thrust his sword behind the altar tapestries. To Angelo's horror one man even dared penetrate the chancel, and crawled beneath the choir stalls and cardinal's chair. They found no one, however, and finally gathered near the entrance. The officers among them cursed their dullness. Turning to Angelo, he said impatiently:

"Have you seen anyone, boy?"

"No one, officer," answered Angelo, with averted eyes.

Then a sudden thought striking the officer, he called to his men: "Pest! the sacristy forgotten."

They turned in a body toward that door. Angelo sprang before them.

"Father Pietro is there at his prayers."

Suspicious at once, the officer thrust Angelo aside. The soldiers pressed into the room. They saw only red and white vestments hanging quietly on the wall, and over in the corner the little altar with its carved crucifix. There a black-robed figure knelt with bent head and shadowed face. The soldiers paused abashed. The officer crossed himself and murmured hastily:

"Your pardon, Father." Then turning to Angelo, "show the way toward the cloister. The Brothers might have a fancy for the King's prisoner."

Angelo opened the door and they departed. They crossed the garden and aroused the Brothers in the cloister beyond. They inspected its cells, its chapel, and refectory. Then an instant later they were dashing down the street again with a kick to the horses, an oath to the luck. As these sounds faded away the man kneeling in the sacristy arose awkwardly, stumbling over his long cassock. Angelo stared at him a moment, then, terrified anew at the thought of confronting Judas Iscariot, he fled out of the church.

He ran through the garden and paused at last by the gateway. Where was Liza? He must tell someone. Would she never come? Suppose she had forgotten and gone home already? It was after Vespers that she came, but last week she was surely here by this time. He glanced toward the church. Was the terrible Judas still in the sacristy? The noisy, red-faced soldiers might return at any moment, and drag him away to some hideous torment. Should he tell Brother Antonio or still try to save Judas? He remembered

his lie in the church—the wicked man concealed in the holy Father's cassock. What would the Abbot say! He dared not tell even Brother Antonio. Nothing could avail. Judas must suffer. Then he heard again the Brother's words of that afternoon: "One little unkindness lengthens his penance a hundred years, and for one kind act he may be pardoned and received into Paradise."

The sound of wheels coming down the street reached Angelo at this point. He caught sight of the white donkey advancing leisurely and Liza seated in the market cart. He ran out of the gate to meet her. "Liza, Liza," he cried, seizing her hand as she dismounted, and dragging her into the garden with him. There Angelo told the story of the soul of Judas Iscariot, and his own wonderful encounter. Struggling vainly to dispel Liza's terrors, he became the more confident and determined himself.

"You must pretend to go home, Liza, and hide on the roadway and come back after it is dark—oh, so quietly! Late at night, after the Abbot has locked the gate, I will take the key and give it to the man in the sacristy, and no one will know. He can ride with you safely outside the town, and we shall have saved him."

But Liza cried bitterly. "Angelo, Angelo, I dare not. The father will beat me if I come home so late. Our donkey is tired, I must go home—I have done no harm to Judas. I dare not ride alone with the evil one."

"But he must be saved, Liza; Brother Antonio has said it, and the Brothers know everything. If you will not help me there will be another hundred years added to his misery. The blessed Virgin will be grateful to you if you help, and send you something for Easter—and Liza, you shall have the little gilt cross that Brother Antonio gave me, and you can wear it always round your neck. Besides, what matter if the father beat you? One beating is soon over—the cross will be yours forever."

He swung it toward her on its string, and it shone beautiful and bright in the sunlight. Thus Angelo urged and Liza still resisted. She retained only a jumbled idea of Angelo's story. She had but a vague picture in her mind of the wicked, dead Judas, who was somehow spitefully haunting Angelo and herself. She again caught sight of the gilt cross, still swinging in Angelo's hand. She clutched at it, tied it

around her neck, and watched it shine on her bare, brown skin. So, thinking of the little ornament and not at all of the soul of poor Judas Iscariot, she consented to do Angelo's will. At the last moment he again terrified her.

"If you do not come, Liza, he will send evil spirits to pinch you black and blue. The cross about your neck will turn into a cloven hoof. But you must come. You must save some of your bread and cheese for him; and when he gets into the cart you must take the road around the walls instead of straight home through the town. If any question you, say it is a priest who goes to visit the fever sick along the coast; that the Father is tired and has gone to sleep in the bottom of the cart. Then they will not disturb him. Outside the town he can get down and go away in peace somewhere in the darkness." Liza tremblingly promised, and departed.

That night Angelo sat abstractedly through the supper in the refectory, the evening prayers, and afterward lay long awake. Then he arose and crept through the cool corridor; past the Brothers' cells; past the door to the Abbot's room. His feet made no sound on the stone floor, but his heart beat noisily. A loud sound reached him and he paused in fright. Someone must have heard—no, it was but a Brother breathing heavily. He went on again, down the narrow stairs to the cloister entrance. In the darkness at the foot, he fumbled on the wall for the two keys, to the cathedral and to the garden gate. He put his fingers upon them at last, and pushed open the door. A sudden draught swept in; he went out, closing it again quickly—hurrying across the windy garden—into the black church. He hoped the terrible Judas had escaped somehow, or that it was all a curious dream he should soon awake from. But no; as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, he saw the man, curled close against a pillar and sleeping soundly, his arm bent under his head for a pillow. The light from the windows fell across his face, which was still and untroubled. Angelo stood watching him, and somehow he no longer felt any fear. Tonio opened his eyes the next instant, and seeing no one but Angelo, smiled sleepily, sat up and stretched himself. He followed trustingly out of the church to the garden gateway. Angelo opened it and waited. The moments passed slowly, each one an eternity. What if Liza failed to come! What if the Abbot awoke and found

them! By and by the faintest click of the donkey's hoof came down the street; a few moments later the curious comrades, Liza and the evil one together, went out into the night.

At the last instant Angelo whispered hastily: "As you hope for mercy on your soul do not frighten the little sister."

Tonio bent forward and murmured sheepishly, "Have no fear." Then he added: "Some fine morning, boy, you will wake and find the saints long-faced, sorry fellows. . . . The world is a merry place, after all. Come with me—it may not be so ill a thing to have Judas Iscariot for a friend."

Angelo, bewildered, shrank back. He watched the donkey cart until it was lost in the darkness; then he crept inside the gate and locked it, saying meanwhile a prayer for the soul of Judas Iscariot.

The tree tops rocked mysteriously in the night wind. The thin clouds parted suddenly, and the moonlight lay across the garden, blanching the path, the church door, a corner of the cloister. Against the wall Angelo saw the Judas tree, in this mild light shining with pure, white blossoms.



T the Sign of the Sound Pig: The Story of a Strange Happening*

THE sign itself was of a red amorphous sow couchant and at the same time hovering, as it were, over a green ground that suggested grass, while a little to the left a piglet, excusably regardant, blinked at the curious perspective. But the inscription on the board ran, "The Sound Pig, by S. Turfy."

Jerry Jull smiled upon it! Mrs. Turfy (being the same as the S. Turfy of the inscription) had just ejected him from the tap-room, because he had had enough to drink for the good of the house and more than enough for his own. It was the third day Jerry had been off work, and Mrs. Turfy was tired of him. To have him lolopping there all day, smiling to himself and deliberately consuming ale in half-pints (which necessitated constant attendance at an hour when not another soul was on the premises to make it worth while) was, she declared, intolerable. Moreover, she disliked to see a man a-sillying himself.

"It doan't pay in th' end," she said warningly.

"Ah, so ut be," said Jerry, complacent.

"So what be?"

Jerry tried to remember, but could not.

"Termups," he ventured, and guessing from the lowering of Mrs. Turfy's brows that he had not been quite apropos, "An' t'weather—simly fine sunny weather—so ut be," he added craftily.

"Out yew go into it," said Mrs. Turfy, taking him by the sleeve.

That was how Jerry came to be standing underneath the swinging sign. He was not aware of having suffered any indignity. Blandness possessed him. His only concern was that he could not recollect why he was there or what his plans for the afternoon were. But, after all, that mattered little.

* From Black and White.

Nothing mattered at all. His whole face was wreathed in smiles. Merely as a matter of curiosity, he thought he should like to know if the ground was as firm as it looked, and he put out one leg gingerly. Curiously enough, it was not so firm. It heaved a little, and Jerry's foot had some difficulty in establishing a firm position upon it. Necessity⁷ urged him to put the other foot after it to obtain any proper balance whatever.

If you place one foot in front of you and follow it up with the other, in all probability you cover a certain amount of space. This natural law presented itself to Jerry in the form of a discovery that he was not underneath the sign, but facing it. He knew it very well by sight, having seen it most days of his life for twenty-nine years. But to see it unexpectedly like that gave it a fresh interest, and he perused the inscription earnestly—"Shound Pig," he read out.

Wonderful thing—the art of painting—Jerry thought. There was something about the sow astonishingly life-like. So there was about the grass on which she couched. He began to calculate the amount of hay it was likely to yield, but was impeded by the perspective. The mead seemed to stretch indefinitely.

But the young pig—that really looked laughably real. He could almost hear it grumping. What a splendid creature it would grow into! The notion of the young pig growing up was so comical that somehow Jerry was convulsed. "Sh—sh—ound Pig," he repeated.

It was then that a quaint thing occurred. The sow rose up, shook herself, and with a snort of disgust descended from the sign-board into the road. The pig followed with a toss of its head and a scream, galloping down through the air so as not to be left behind. The whole thing happened in an instant, almost before Jerry could rub his eyes.

When he looked again, the board still swung there, the grass of its pleasant meadow blown a little in the breeze, but the sow and pig were below in the road, following their noses toward the open moors.

What was to be done? Jerry's first consideration was for the landlady of the inn. At no time is it agreeable to lose one's possessions like that, but if Mrs. Turfy's extremely valuable sow went astray with that promising pig, what would she do? So far as Jerry knew, she had no others. And these,

living as they did in a field on a sign-board, were probably unique of their kind. Few pigs are accustomed to live on sign-boards. If they were lost on the moors, they could hardly be replaced.

The inference was—they must not be lost, and prompt in action, Jerry called out loud: "Missus Turfy!"

There was no reply. Jerry sidled to the door of the inn and kicked violently.

"Missus Turfy!" he shouted. "Hi, Missus Turfy!"

The landlady's voice came in a shrill from the second floor.

"Yew bain't comen in here agen, Jerry Jull, an' doan't 'ee think it!"

It is hard for a man bent on doing a kindness to be rebuffed in this manner. It seemed less than kind to Jerry, who could not remember any cause for disagreement between himself and Mrs. Turfy. Still, he felt too magnanimous to be put off by any want of feeling on the other side, and he continued kicking.

"'Tis aleng of t' sow and t' lil pig," he vociferated. "They be coom down from t' booard, Missus Turfy, an' they be a scudden straight for t' Pike Moor!"

Mrs. Turfy thrust her head out of the window, eyed the sign-board and sniffed.

"Ef yew doan't stop a-kicking ma door," she said, "ah'll splosh a pail o' watter over 'ee!"

"But t' sow's loose," Jerry protested, "an' t' lil—"

"Cut along arter they, then!"

Jerry, still kicking vigorously, heard the ominous swish of water in a pail overhead. It seemed monstrous that a sensible woman like Mrs. Turfy should be willing to bear what would certainly be a pecuniary loss apart from sentimental considerations. But he would help her in spite of herself.

"All ri', Mrs. Turfy, ah'm—"

A deluge of water from the window above narrowly escaped him.

Jerry gave a final kick.

"Ah'm gwoan to fetch they, Mrs. Turfy," he said charitably. 'Don't yew fret!'

And, hearing more swishing of water, he put up his elbows, and started running. Ahead of him were the truant swine some distance along the road.

"Ta—ally ho!" cried Jerry.

A wind-borne grunt came snorting back to him. It gave

zest to the chase. Jerry avowed himself that there was no merrier way of spending an afternoon.

Now the things that followed upon this are as clear in his mind to-day—Mr. Jull says—as they were then. Clearer if anything, for some new detail is always presenting itself to him, and the story grows in length as well as in gruesomeness. But I have to be brief. What happened, shortly, was this:

The road which the swine had taken winds like a string of white chalk for half a mile, rising gradually between green hedges to the level of the moors. Then the hedges give out and the road runs straight to the horizon, but on either hand the open moorland lies. And it was Jerry's object to prevent the swine reaching this, and turning off into the infinite scrub that climbs and dips for miles to right and left.

To begin with, he fancied it was an easy matter. The red was clear on the white of the road, and the hedges prevented doubling. Nor were the creatures, it seemed, in any great haste though they went at a persevering trot.

Only when Jerry made a great spurt and came up with them, it was not so easy. No sooner was he at them than they dodged, each a different side of the road, squealing, but always going forward. In vain he tried to head them off. A grunt and a rush, and one or other was in front again. And the moors were getting close.

"Sink un!" exclaimed Jerry, alter a fifth failure.

"Sink yoursel'!"

Jerry gasped. It was the impish pig that had spoken. Never had Jerry known a pig speak before. And this one was so young. All the same, a man of Jerry's caliber was not going to be flouted by a sucking pig.

"What di' yew saay?" he inquired sternly.

"Sink yoursel'!"

With this repetition the little creature made a most violent dart between Jerry's legs.

"Ah, would 'ee now?" said Jerry, deeply incensed.

He grabbed at the thing's curl of a tail. It skipped aside like a rabbit. But chance assisted Jerry. His hand lighted on the tail of the sow and closed tight.

"Ah've got one on 'ee," he cried in glee.

"G-r-r-r!"

"Come along whoam, will 'ee!" Jerry continued.

G-r-r-r! Instead of compliance, yet another grunt. The sow ran on. All of a sudden Jerry realized that he could not let go. His feelings—Jerry hints—were more easily imagined than described. And it seems not unlikely that this was so. A sort of horror made him feel warm all over, and his reasoning faculties deserted him. All that he knew was that the more he tried to draw away his hand, the more it clung to the sow's tail, or the sow's tail clung to it. What is worse, they were on the moors now.

"Halp!" cried Jerry, in a fright.

Just coming over a track to the left, Moonbridge way, was Mr. Stallycoot, the Rector, and it was to him with a sinking heart that Jerry appealed. For he was apt to be absent-minded, though benevolent, and he was decidedly deaf. Still, one would suppose that even a deaf parson would perceive the horrible incongruity of a man being dragged across the moors at the end of a sow's tail.

"Halp!" Jerry cried desperately, as he drew near at a gallop. "Halp!"

"Bless my soul!" The Rector stopped and adjusted his glasses. "What's that? Eh—?" A slight frown crossed his beaming face as he perceived Jerry. "It's you, Jull, again, is it? What do you want? What's got you?"

"T' Devil!" Jerry shouted.

That was a mistake. He had put it briefly, partly from breathlessness, partly because the sow would not stop to let him explain. And the Rector took it in the wrong spirit. He looked pained and turned away. Plainly, he thought Jerry was in liquor, instead of perfectly sober and in a terrible predicament.

"T' Devil, t' very Devil!" Jerry repeated frantically. Another moment and he would be beyond reach. What was it Mr. Stallycoot was saying?

"Beware, Jull, for the Devil you are thoughtlessly invoking goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom——"

"She be a scuppering sow!" Jerry groaned. "Halp!"

"Fie, Jerry Jull!" said Mr. Stallycoot. "Fie! If you were to practice—I do not say teetotalism, which is not given to us all—but I do say habits of temperance, moderation, and industry, I firmly contend that there would be less of this terrible——"

But Jerry had gone whizzing past, and the advice was lost

upon him. Ziz-zag went the sow, and zig-zag the little pig charging Jerry's legs incessantly. Rip and tear, through brambles and gorse, waist deep in thorns and prickles they sped. When Jerry could divert his attention from these obstacles to screw his head round, the Rector was a mile away, perched on the brow of Pike Moor, like a magpie in his white tie and black coat.

"Who was yon, Jerry?"

The sow was addressing him this time, and by name. It gave Jerry a hope that by a show of deference he might conciliate her.

"T' Paarson," he said apologetically.

But g-r-r-r-mp! At that she was off more terrifically than ever. The wind positively whistles past Jerry's ears; six tall brambles he was taking in a stride; it seemed at this pace they must soon come to the rim of the world. And while he was wondering what the end of it all would be, and if the little pig could really be keeping up, the sow plunged]vehe-
mently down into a green and dismal ooze with a dive and a wallow, and there was Jerry neck-high in mud, half choked, and the impish pig alongside kicking mud in his eyes.

"Mussy a me!" wailed Jerry, as they emerged the other side preparatory to hurtling into a maze of gorse. "Ah cud wish ah were whoam, ah cud."

Hardly had the words left his mouth when the sow slowed down. Jerry says that it was like magic, the change, and he realized, shrewdly enough, that there was some virtue in the words he had used.

"What be'est sayen?" inquired the sow, uneasily.

"Ah cud wish ah were whoam, ah cud."

Not a word would Jerry, in his new-born sagacity, leave unsaid or vary, and he was justified by the result. For—

"An' so yew mid be," said the sow, plainly unwilling.

"Wi' yew a-tuggen ma hand?"

The sow sulked and Jerry pressed the question. The little pig had ranged up, and now began to squeal pitifully.

"Lemme go whoam! Lemme go whoam!"

"Ah wud," said Jerry. "There iddn't no comfortabler place than t' booard for a lil pig."

"So yew say," broke in the sow. "But 'tis like this: t'were along o' yew that we kem out."

"Along o' me?"

"See-en yew loloppen an' light-haded set me an' the lil' pig off. S'long as yew was gwoan to t' Devil, ah couldn't see what for we shouldn't go. T'is weary stayen allus in a sign-board."

"But ah bean't gwoan to t' Devil," said Jerry, scandalized.

"Doan't yew be ower sure. Afore yew be sure, yew'll ha to see me whoam—me an' lil pig."

"Ah 'll do ut willin', ef so be yew cud undo your tail."

"T'wudden do to trust 'ee," sad the sow.

"Not ef ah were to carry t' lil pig? He's tired simly."

The sow hesitated. She looked at the landscape longingly and her ears shook with desire of a scamper. Not far off was a prodigious quag. And Jerry struck in hastily:

"Ah'd carry t' lil pig all t' way."

"Op wi' un then," said the sow sulkily.

Jerry stooped and lifted the squeaking creature. It was heavy as lead, and his own spine went near cracking with the strain. But he persevered, and no sooner was it in his arms than he found his hand free.

"Lemme go whoam," wailed the little pig.

"Bide quiet," said Jerry, stepping out with a will.

The sow came lumbering after them.

It was not a dignified procession, nor was it light work or in any way resembling the entertainment which Jerry had hoped to derive from the afternoon. He hoped none of his acquaintances would meet him. But compared with his recent experiences it was as good as a circus. He felt so safe. He skirted the bog through which they had weltered, and avoided the bramble-spikes and the gorse. And though his arm ached mightily, the distance traversed did not appear to be so great as he had thought. As they drew near to the road again, he even felt inclined to converse with the sow.

"An' t'was along o' ma taking a day off that yew tuk un an' t' lil pig tuk 'un," he remarked.

The sow made no reply.

"'Tis a curous thing," continued Jerry. "We was all gwoan to t' Devil simly an' pretty faast."

No answer. The little pig seemed to be asleep and growing lighter. Now they were on the road again, and no one about. By the time Jerry had got under the sign-board, the pig had dwindled so in weight that he looked closely at it to see if anything was the matter. It was no longer under his arm.

"Flewed oop," said the sow, briefly. And sure enough there it was in the sign-board, blinking at the perspective.

"An' now yew'll ha' to hoist me," said the sow.

Jerry bent down, put his arms about her, and heaved.

"Oop!" he called.

The vastness of her upflying weight precipitated him forward on his face, and he lay on the ground a little to collect his senses. When he had risen he looked up. There was the sign-board swinging in the wind, and the red sow in it hovering over the grass the same as ever. Indeed, for a moment Jerry doubted if she had ever come down.

He looked about him. It was still early in the afternoon apparently, the sun still shining and not a soul come back from work. Jerry stepped to the door of the inn and knocked.

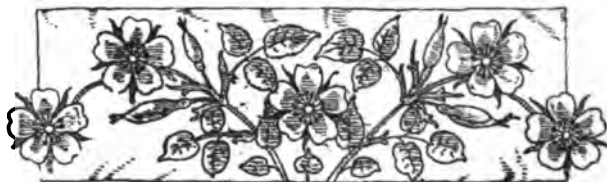
"Be that yew still, Jerry Jull?" cried Mrs. Turfy; "yew bain't comen in, mind."

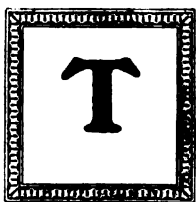
"Noa," said Jerry slowly. "Ah bain't—not ef ah knaws ut. But ah thought as ah'd let yew knaw, Missus Turfy, as t' sow an' t' lil pig az back in t' booard."

"'Tiddn't trew, surely?" said Mrs. Turfy, sarcastically.

"An'," continued Jerry, undeterred by her lack of interest, "ef ah was yew, ah'd tie a rope round they—ower t' booard like. 'Tis a vallyble sow an' lil pig, an' yew wouldn't laike to lose they."

Then he retreated swiftly but steadily, with one eye on the sign-board.





HE Captain of the Penguin: The Story of a Coasting Trip, by J. C. Plummer*



CAPTAIN COALE had written to his wife from Boston that he was offered a profitable job on a wrecking expedition to the Nova Scotian coast, and, as freights were very low, he would accept. He would let the brig *Penguin* lie idle at the snug New Jersey wharf until his return, which might be soon or much delayed, he couldn't say. He advised that Mr. Somers, chief officer of the *Penguin*, be retained on pay, as he did not wish to lose him and he could take care of the brig.

Mrs. Coale, who had been wedded only a short time and whose dowry had completed the purchase of the brig, communicated this news to Mr. Somers, and to Mrs. Nancy Birdsall, who was visiting her.

"It seems a pity," said Mrs. Birdsall, "to have that there brig layin' at the wharf doing nothing."

"There's nothing for her to do," sighed Mrs. Coale; "I wish there was; she's earning nothing lying at the wharf."

"Wouldn't it be a nice thing, if you could only sail her, to take a trip down to Eben Slocum's in Virginia?" suggested Mrs. Birdsall.

"Why, Nancy!" exclaimed Mrs. Coale, "the very thing. Mr. Somers will do the sailing and I'll be captain; no, I can't be captain, I'll be captainess. Do you know I've never been to sea, and I am dying to rise and fall on the salt sea waves?"

"How poetic you do talk sometimes, Sarah," said Mrs. Birdsall, admiringly. "But, for the land's sake, I didn't really mean it. Suppose a storm strikes the brig and sinks her?"

*Written for Short Stories.

"Storms ain't likely right now," replied Mrs. Coale; "besides, if one comes we'll drop anchor and wait till the rain is over. As to sinking, that's Mr. Somers' business to look out for."

Mr. Somers was not enthusiastic when the scheme was broached to him. He dared not refuse to obey the half owner of the brig and his paymistress, but he made difficulties. He had no sailors.

"Get 'em," retorted Mrs. Coale, with brevity.

Mr. Somers finally managed to rake together three seamen.

"These are all I can get," said he; "we ought to have five men 'fore the mast."

"Oh, we'll get along with three," remarked Mrs. Coale, cheerfully, "we are not going far and are not in a hurry."

"I can't find a cook," grumbled Mr. Somers.

"I'll take Righteous Barnes out of the kitchen," said Mrs. Coale.

"They gen'rally have men cooks aboard ship," put in Mr. Somers.

"And men captains," retorted Mrs. Coale; "but this ship will have a captainess."

Mr. Somers subsided.

It was a very fine noon when the *Penguin*, with all sails outspread, buffeted the waves of the broad Atlantic, out of sight of the Jersey coast. Mrs. Coale, standing on the quarter-deck, gazed thoughtfully at the sails. "Nancy," she said, "what do you think of those sails?"

"I think they need washin', Sarah," replied Mrs. Birdsall.

"Mr. Somers," called Mrs. Coale, "we are not in a big hurry to get to Eben Slocum's, as he's busy about this time getting in his garden truck, so I think you had better have those sails taken down and washed."

"Washed?" exclaimed Mr. Somers, aghast.

"Certainly, they are very dirty. I'd be ashamed to meet a ship."

"Oh," remarked Mr. Somers, "the fust shower we'll have will wash 'em all right."

"Mr. Somers," asked Mrs. Birdsall, reproachfully, "if your shirt was dirty would you wear it until a rain came and washed it?"

"All right," said the mate, struck by the point, "I'll have them down and washed right away."

"You'll find some of Jorkin's Washing Compound in the cabin," said Mrs. Coale, "it's a grand thing for cleanin'."

The sails were taken down, the hawse holes stopped up with swabs, water pumped on deck and washing commenced.

"Say," said Ben, the oldest seaman, to the mate, "get me some starch and have the irons good and hot, these here sails 'll look gorgeous standin' out stiff and white with a strip of red flannel tied around the mast and hangin' over the sail."

The two sailors laughed gleefully, but Mr. Somers was glum.

"Stow your guff," said he, "and obey orders."

When the renovated sails were spread once more to the breeze both ladies admired them hugely, and as Righteous had little to do that afternoon, she was put to scrubbing the quarter-deck with sand soap and a brush. The next morning it was dead calm and for want of something to do, Mr. Somers, who acted as if the voyage did not interest him, overhauled the flag locker, to the great admiration of the ladies.

"Oh, how cute!" exclaimed Mrs. Birdsall, holding up a triangular flag with a white ground and a red ball in the middle.

"And look at this," said Mrs. Coale, pointing to a square flag with blue and white squares.

"Them's signal flags," said Mr. Somers, "Internat'al code, the red ball flag means 'C,' and the square flag means 'N'."

Mrs. Birdsall gave a squeal of joy.

"My initials," she gasped, "N for Nancy, and C for Cobus, my maiden name, you know, and oh, Sarah, this is my birthday!"

"I'll hoist these flags to the mast in your honor, Nancy," said Mrs. Coale. "Hoist them, Mr. Somers, the N above the C."

"Them's signals," growled Mr. Somers, "if we hist them up in that fashion it will mean we are in distress and want assistance. Ships will be bearin' down on us, Mum."

"How nice that'll be," exclaimed Mrs. Coale, "it is awfully poky all by one's self and we may meet some real nice people."

"Surely," assented Mrs. Birdsall.

"I'll hist them if you order it, Mum," said Mr. Somers sadly, "but it may make trouble."

"Nonsense," replied Mrs. Coale, "we needn't ask them to meals unless we want, if the people from the ships do come aboard."

Mr. Somers had the fateful flags hoisted, and then hurried

to the extremity of the bow, where, with his lips moving, he resembled a man apostrophizing the ocean.

The brig dawdled along before the merest ghost of a breeze until about noon, when a large steamer hove in sight. The officers aboard evidently noted the distress signals of the *Penguin*, for the steamer bore down on them and finally slowed up.

Then a man on the bridge bellowed through a megaphone, "Brig ahoy, what's the matter?"

"Don't answer him," said Mrs. Birdsall indignantly, "it's real ill-bred to shout that way at ladies."

"Do you want us to board you?" shrieked the megaphone.

Mrs. Coale waved her handkerchief and giggled. Mrs. Birdsall dove into the cabin to arrange her hair.

The big steamer stopped and lowered a boat, which presently delivered on board the *Penguin* a stout, florid-faced Englishman.

"I am chief mate of the steamer, Mum," said he, "how can we help you?"

"I don't think we need any help, thank you kindly," replied Mrs. Coale politely, "but we are very glad to see you."

The chief officer stared around him.

"Where's the captain?" he asked.

"There is no captain on board," replied Mrs. Coale, "I am the captainess."

"Why have you the distress signal flying?" inquired the officer, his face becoming very red.

"Oh," said Mrs. Coale, "that's in honor of my friend's birthday; you see her name before she was married was Nancy Cobus, so I have hoisted the flag meaning 'N' over the one meaning 'C'. It seems a little hind before, but it's the only way to get the right initials. Mr. Chief Officer, Mrs. Nancy Birdsall."

The officer made a feint of taking off his cap in honor of Mrs. Birdsall, but was seized with a sudden choking that made him turn away from the ladies rather suddenly. Having at last recovered himself, he said:

"Glad to know you, Mum. So there's really nothing I can do for you?"

"Thank you, nothing," replied Mrs. Coale, "but I am real glad you called, for it is quite lonesome at sea."

"Where are you bound?" asked the officer.

"To Eben Slocum's," responded Mrs. Coale. "Do you think we are sailing in the right direction?"

"I never headed for that port myself," answered the officer, "but I think you are."

"Won't you stay to dinner?" asked Mrs. Birdsall hospitably.

"Sorry, Mum, but I must go back to my steamer; we have a cargo of cattle bound for London."

"If you have cattle on board," said Mrs. Birdsall, "I might buy a Jersey heifer if you don't ask too high. We could use one on our farm."

"Sorry, Mum," replied the officer, "we have only bullocks on board and I must be going."

"I remember," exclaimed Mrs. Coale, detaining him, "that a cousin of mine, Jim Stubbs—you remember Jim, Nancy—went over to England in a cattle boat and is now butchering in Sheffield. Maybe he would buy one of your bullocks if you write to him."

"I'll certainly do so, Mum," said the officer, and hurrying into his boat he was rowed back to the steamer, which at once moved off.

"I don't think that gentleman is used to ladies' society, Nancy," said Mrs. Coale; "did you notice how he colored up?"

"Poor creetur," exclaimed Mrs. Birdsall, "I expect he has to spend all his time driving them cattle about the decks and has no time for manners."

The evening wore on wearily, scarcely any wind and a dull haze. The distress signals flapped harmlessly against the mast without drawing any more visitors and the night came apace arm in arm with such a dense fog that as far as seeing where they were was concerned they might have been suspended in mid-air instead of floating on the water.

Mr. Somers, gleaming as to his clothes and beard as if sprinkled with powdered silver, ordered hideous sounds to be drawn from the fog horn and the crew to remain on deck the whole night.

"It would be a pity if a ship passed now," remarked Mrs. Birdsall, "we couldn't see her."

"It 'd be Gord's Providence if she passed and didn't run into us," said Mr. Somers.

"If there is any ships near us," said Mrs. Coale, "I am sure that horrid horn will keep the people awake. Why don't you stop it, Mr. Somers?"

The mate indignantly went forward without reply and the wailing of the horn continued.

"I suppose he's blowin' that horn to keep ships from running into us," remarked Mrs. Coale.

"I don't see," retorted Mrs. Birdsall, "why ships, when they see a fog comin', don't let down their anchors and wait for clear weather."

"I guess the sailors don't like the trouble of pulling the anchors up," said Mrs. Coale.

"The more shame to 'em," exclaimed Mrs. Birdsall emphatically. "Let's go to bed; there's nothing to see and we won't have any visitors to-night."

The ladies were aroused at dawn by Mr. Somers announcing that there was a vessel in distress on the port bow.

"Merciful heavens," exclaimed Mrs. Coale, leaping from her bunk, "get up, Nancy, we have run our port bow into a ship."

The ladies hastened on deck and were looking vacantly around them when Mr. Somers pointed out the vessel just visible amidst the rapidly clearing mists.

"I thought," said Mrs. Birdsall, with disappointment, "that he said the vessel was on our port bow, and it's miles away."

"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Coale of the mate.

"I am bearing down on 'em as fast as the wind 'll let me," said Mr. Somers, "and that's not fast enough, I am afeared, for she's sinkin', her deck is nearly awash. Hello, they're getting out the boats."

"For the land's sake, here they come, Sarah," exclaimed Mrs. Birdsall, "and look at my hair."

Mrs. Coale nearly collapsed at the realization of her own appearance, and both ladies rushed into their staterooms, calling Righteous the cook as they ran.

"Put on the new napkins, Righteous," called Mrs. Coale, in tones that suggested hair in her mouth.

"Don't forget the coffee urn, Righteous," screamed Mrs. Birdsall, "and the tablecloth last night had a gravy stain on it, get a new one."

"If there are many of 'em we'll be short of plates, I know," moaned Mrs. Coale.

But no time was allowed for much improvement, as the castaways were heard on deck by the time the ladies were in passable presentation shape, and they were about going on

deck when the stairs were blocked by a burly man who seized Mrs. Coale and kissed her loudly.

"Hello, old girl," said he.

"Why, Samuel," exclaimed Mrs. Coale, recognizing her husband, "I thought you were in Nova Scotia!"

"I came very near being at the bottom of the Atlantic," replied the captain, "and being turned from a wrecker into a wreck."

"Were you on the sinking ship?" asked Mrs. Coale.

"I was. You see, we finished up on the coast quicker than I expected, and as Captain Grigg was about to sail for Philadelphia with his schooner, I came down on her. Last night with all our lights burning and the fog horn squealing a blundering steamer ran into us and then kept on as if nothing had happened. We started in at the pumps, but had made up our minds to leave the schooner when your brig hove in sight through the fog.

"For the land's sake," exclaimed Mrs. Birdsall, "it seems a Providence we were sailing along here."

"How comes it that the old *Penguin* is cruising along here?" asked Captain Coale, "I thought she was moored at her wharf."

"Oh," replied his wife, "we got tired of seeing her do nothing and were going to run down to Virginia and pay Eben Slocum a visit."

"Come on deck," cried the jolly skipper, "I'll introduce you to Captain Grigg."

"I can't understand," said Captain Grigg, "why, if there's nothing the matter you should have distress signals flyin'."

Mrs. Coale explained.

"Well," said the skipper gallantly, "it is a mistake to hist distress signals to mark the day you were born, miss," and he glared at Mrs. Birdsall with admiration depicted in every lineament of his countenance.

Mrs. Birdsall blushed and saw that Captain Grigg had the best of the breakfast.

After the meal Captain Coale glanced aloft and ordered the yards shifted.

"We'll let Eben Slocum alone this trip," said he, "he's planting potatoes, anyway. We'll steer for New York and have a few days' holiday."

And they did.



THE Sergeant's Idea: An African Sketch, by G. Stanley Ellis*.



A WISE man," said the sergeant, "will often be a fool, but a fool will never be anything else. And a few wise men are worth more than a heap of fools, or perhaps even than a heap of wise men. And a few fools are worth more than a heap of fools. As how? Thus. When we were at Parda, up in what they call the Hinterland, beyond Bamboa, which is on the west coast of Africa, the lieutenant and I, and a sergeant of the 'Lions,' the King's Own, and two hundred of our niggers made a reconnaissance. When we were three days' march beyond Parda, we became aware of a big crowd of niggers, who seemed to wish to bar our way. We judged that by the fact that no fewer than two thousand of them came up against us with all the weapons they could muster—bows and arrows, spears, and such things. Those of them who had trade guns, with gallant disregard of the danger to the men at the butt ends of the old gas-pipes, fired them off at us. At last the lieutenant said:

"Sergeant Harding, the men, for raw blacks, have stood very well. But they're getting a bit out of hand now, and there are at least a dozen down. Do you think any of yours have enough grit in them to cover the—er—retirement?"

"Well, sir, I don't feel very sure of them. Their fellow-heathens have put the fear of God into them. But I'll try with them."

"They stood—oh, yes, they stood—ever so much better than I'd ever expected to see them stand. I retired them by alternate half-sections. The retiring half-section did its work thoroughly, and retired for all it was worth. The covering

*From Longman's Magazine.

half-section did not seem to have its heart in its work quite so much as the other had, but when I saw a man getting nervous I distracted his attention from the enemy by attacking him in the rear with my boot. They would rather face a possible bullet than a certain ammunition-boot. The difficulty with me was to keep in touch with the two half-sections. If I left the covering half-section, it had a tendency to be afraid of bullets, and if I left the retiring half-section, it had a tendency to keep on retiring. But I kept them up to the scratch with all the abusive terms that I had been able to pick up out of their language, and filled up the gaps with a little Tommy language at the top of my voice. It is more the noise you make than what you say. And, when language of all kinds failed, I recollected that some philosopher before me had said, 'Actions speak louder than words.' Now, I have always been a bit of a philosopher myself—that is, with regard to other folks—and I brought in the boot. When night fell the attack dropped off bit by bit till it ceased, and we rejoined the main body.

"'Very good, very good, indeed, sergeant,' said the lieutenant.

"'They're all plucky, sir,' said I, 'our niggers and the other niggers, too. They're very handy in a free fight, and they enjoy it as much as if they were Irish members of Parliament.'

"'Yes, sergeant. But what I was surprised to see was how well they kept on the defensive in retiring. A rear-guard action is trying to the best troops."

"'It was their fear for their rear that kept them up, sir.'

"'Oh,' said the lieutenant, in a puzzled way. It would never do for an officer to acknowledge to an N. C. O. that he didn't understand.

"'We seem to have beaten off the enemy, sir.'

"'No, you mustn't congratulate yourself on having done quite as much as that, sergeant. You ought to know by now that black men are very superstitious, and that they dislike doing anything at night for fear of evil spirits. Even our own trained blacks won't do anything in the dark unless they are led by white men. These natives who attacked us have certainly formed a camp for the night; you can even see from here the fires they have lighted to keep off evil spirits.'

“‘Yes, sir. I judge them to be about three miles off.’

“‘That is about it.’

“‘Couldn’t we push on a bit, sir, while they are resting?’

“‘No. You had the best of the men, and your men were kept going by the fact that they were fighting. But the bulk of the main body are clean done, and many of them couldn’t march another mile.’

“‘Can’t we leave them behind, sir?’

“‘Not to be killed and eaten, though it would do the enemy good, and serve them right, to let them eat some of our niggers. There is nothing for it but to camp till the morning, and then to carry on as before.’

“‘So the lieutenant and I and the Lion took our rations together, for when you are schooling niggers in West Africa there is more difference between a white man and a black man than there is between an officer and an N. C. O.

“‘It reminds me, sir,’ said the Lion, with his mouth full, ‘of what happened in ’57, in the Mutiny, to my father, who was then corporal in the——’

“‘Thank you, sergeant,’ said the lieutenant, ‘but I’ve often heard of things which remind you of what happened to your relations. And I must say that I never—out of the Engineers, that is—knew, in spite of the fact that, on the surface, you appear a little heavy, a more lively imagination in drawing parallels. But please get that Maconochie out of your mouth before telling us any more.’

“‘(If you’re admitted to mess with officers, you have to pay for it.)

“‘Maconochie, sir,’ said the Lion indignantly; ‘*mine’s* only bully-beef.’

“‘Well, we’ll share and share alike to-night,’ said the lieutenant, ‘so long as we have no reminiscences.’

“‘I don’t know, sir,’ said the Lion steadfastly, ‘that I can promise you no reminiscences, because they may do you good. And, although you are my officer, I am always willing to do you good.’

“‘That’s kind of you, sergeant. Generally people are opposed to those over them.’

“‘There is a more important matter for me, sir. They may do me good. There was a newspaper man called O’Donovan, who was always nosing about to get information. The way he asked questions was by telling other people tales. And one

tale he told me was about a man called Skobeleff, who made a big name in the Russo-Turkish War. It appears that, like ourselves, a Russian column was once retreating——'

"The lieutenant frowned. I gave the Lion a judicious kick while the lieutenant pretended not to see. The Lion looked a little flabbergasted; then he understood, and went on:

"'A Russian column was strategically retiring, under General Trotsky, from Namangan, because it numbered only eight hundred men. Skobeleff proposed a night attack on the six thousand Khokandians who were in pursuit. He carried it out with a hundred and fifty Cossacks, and it was quite successful.'

"'Sergeant,' said the lieutenant like a flash, 'that's your idea, and you shall carry it out to-night. How many men do you want?'

"The Lion was knocked galley-west.

"'I'd rather you carried it out, sir,' said he respectfully, when he recovered his moral wind. 'It wants a man who is quick at the uptake, and I never was a Skobeleff myself. Now if it had been my uncle in the Horse-Gunners——'

"'I must stop with the main body,' said the lieutenant. 'They'll cut and run if they are left in camp without one of us.'

"'Then I'd like Sergeant Harding with me, sir, and the black sergeant, Big Tom, and sixty good men.'

"'Do you think that will be enough?' asked the lieutenant.

"'I remember, if what Mr. O'Donovan told me was right, sir, that Skobeleff had only a hundred and fifty against six thousand.'

"'All right, sergeant. I don't question your reminiscences; but what General Skobeleff had doesn't prove what you ought to have. As you yourself said, you are not a Skobeleff, so take as many as you think you want.'

"'Sergeant Harding, Big Tom, and sixty men will be quite enough, sir,' said the Lion, who was an obstinate man.

"'When will you start?'

"'About twelve, sir. I shall take twenty men on the right flank, Sergeant Harding twenty men on the left flank, and Big Tom twenty men for a frontal attack. The frontal attack will be the easiest, if I judge the ground right. We shall be all in position before one o'clock. Allow half an hour for delay or going astray, and we shall all attack at half-past one, when I

send up a rocket from the right flank. That will be at the darkest time.'

"'Make it a quarter-past one, sergeant,' said the lieutenant. 'If the others are not up by a quarter of an hour after time, they will either have entirely lost their way or they will have been cut up. In either case they will be of no use to you, and though our blacks will fight when properly led, they won't bear waiting in the middle of the night. Even trained white soldiers want some nursing for that.'

"'Very good, sir,' said the Lion, and at twelve o'clock we started.

"With my twenty men I crept on and on through the dense bush, wherein we heard the forest beasts rustling their way through the underwood. Once, for a moment, I saw a pair of yellow eyes glare full into mine, and I brought my rifle to the charge. I was in mortal fear of treading on a snake, which is a thing I hate. Taking one thing with another, I think the niggers, when they object to night expeditions, are certainly right.

"But at last we got close on the left flank of the enemy, and there came a time of waiting which seemed hours. I found the lieutenant had been quite right in saying that a quarter of an hour was enough. That quarter's wait in the dark as a C. O., without anyone with whom to rub shoulders, being miles above all sympathy and advice, seemed a whole long night to me. I give you my word, it's more companionable and cosier to be in the ranks than to be an officer. The only companionship I had was the chattering behind me of the teeth of the niggers, who were both cold and afraid, and it was all I could do to keep my own from chattering. Just when I thought I could hold on no longer, up went the Lion's rocket with a whiz. It was better to me than the Crystal Palace on a Thursday, or Brock's Benefit, or even than the Policeman's Fête. I never saw a finer display of fireworks than that rocket. We fired a volley, jumped up, and ran in with the bayonet. When I met the Lion, five minutes later, in the middle of the enemy's camp, there was not a live and unwounded adversary who was not running for his life; for an untrained black man who wakes up in the middle of the night, to see what he thinks is a fiery serpent in the air, and to feel what he knows is a bayonet in his stomach or the small of his back, develops running powers not to be got by training. And we let them run; we were pleased

to see it. Next morning, after occupying the camp all night, we marched to our main body. The lieutenant turned out to meet us.

"What did you do, sergeant?"

"We buried three of the enemy, sir, and have ten prisoners and one hundred and twenty guns."

"Where are the rest of the enemy?"

"I don't *know*, sir," said the Lion, "but I should *think* they are about in Zanzibar by now."

"I'm proud of you, sergeant," said the lieutenant. "It was a very ticklish operation with so few men."

"No, sir," said the Lion with a blush; "it reminds me of what Mr. O'Donovan said Skobeleff said. Irregular troops, even of the very bravest, are subject to panics. A night attack is the most nerve-shaking of fights; for irregular troops, if their lines are penetrated, it means destruction. The object being not to cut to pieces, but to strike terror, a small number can make as much noise as a large one. A small party is less liable to confusion and to killing each other. If a small party is destroyed, the destruction does not endanger the main body."

"Thank you, sergeant, very much," said the lieutenant. "But I will not tax your memory any further. I shall recommend you for the D. C. M."

"District court-martial, sir?" said the Lion, with open mouth.

"Not this time, sergeant—Distinguished Conduct Medal."





DEFAULTER: A
Tale of Monte Carlo, by
Oskar Reich. Translated
from the German by J. V.
Minor*



MONSIEUR GÉRARD, chief of the detective bureau in Monte Carlo, and Léon, his secretary, looked up and through the open door:

"Come in, Mademoiselle Lapace!"

The one addressed, a handsome girl in the elegant, but striking costume of the *demi-monde*, stepped into the room.

"We are occupied with the following case," explained Gérard: "The Munich police inform us that a certain Müller, whose description you will find in this paper, has embezzled 18,000 marks from his employer and fled, probably to the Riviera. M. Léon has just been telling me that one of our men reported yesterday that a German was playing for high stakes in the Casino. You will join this man, and as soon as you have formed his acquaintance try to draw him out. The rest I leave to you. There is a reward of 500 marks for the apprehension of this Müller. I have no further orders for you to-day. Send Bernard to me!"

The detective mentioned appeared.

"The head cashier of the Bank of Warsaw," began the chief, "has absconded with 732,000 roubles. He was traced to Vienna, and left there on the sixteenth for Italy. The attention of our colleagues centered itself immediately on the port of Genoa, and yesterday the Ventimiglia authorities were successful in establishing the fact that the man in question—his name is Godulowsky—had turned his steps in this direction. It is now your task to discover this man. Read these reports which have been made on the case up to

*Translated for Short Stories.

the present time!—Now what is your opinion?" asked M. Gérard, as the other returned him the folded paper after a swift survey of its contents.

"I think the Italian police are right. Undoubtedly this defaulter has come here to play. But as it is evident from the whole manner and method in which he has carried through this *coup*, that he is an exceptionally clever rascal, I do not believe that he himself will visit the casino. The fact that it swarms with detectives will certainly be known to him. My opinion is that he is concealing himself in inconspicuous lodgings, somewhere in the vicinity of the gambling hall, to which latter resort he sends an accomplice who places his money and reports to him from time to time for further instructions. The Warsaw reports mention that another person is concerned in the case."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"As a first expedient I shall take my place in the Café de Paris, *vis-à-vis* the entrance to the Casino. I shall disperse my spies about the place and must request that Antoine and his family be appointed for that purpose."

The chief nodded assent and the detective left the room.

A little while later Bernard, in the disguise of an Englishman, entered the Café and seated himself at one of the tables. He had been sitting there perhaps half an hour, when a waiter with cigars—who was also a detective, and daily pursued his calling in this capacity—approached him, and while he was selecting one whispered to him that at a table beyond, under the great palm, a gentleman was sitting to whom another had already come twice.

Bernard stood up and counted. A few minutes later an English family, in reality the detective Antoine, his wife and twelve-year-old son, all in the detective service, seated themselves at a table opposite that of the designated stranger. And after a further stated time had elapsed, Bernard strolled by, whereupon little Antoine cried out, in faultless English: "See, papa, there goes Mr. Jones."

Antoine called to him and he sat down with them.

Another man now came to the adjoining table, and after eating an ice and talking softly but eagerly with the other occupant, took his departure. Little Antoine followed him unremarked. The stranger hurried along the Avenue of Palms and so directly away from the casino. At the corner

of the Rue de Richelieu he paused, but as his whole attention was centered on grown persons he paid no attention to the boy. He went the length of the street, then turned into the Rue des Etoiles, and thus reached at last the gardens of the casino. Even as he re-entered the gambling room he was shadowed by a detective to whom little Antoine had passed the word, after which the latter returned to his father.

About an hour later Bernard saw the stranger emerge again from the casino and walk slowly along the Promenade. In a few moments the man at the table beside him paid his bill and started in the same direction, after him Bernard and Antoine with his family.

At the Place des Princes it seemed to dawn upon the two strangers, who had cast frequent glances behind them, that the English people were persistently following them, and they branched off in opposite directions.

Frau Antoine and her son went after one of them, while the two detectives followed the other, whom they suspected of being Godulowsky, the arch-offender. Having reached the Grand Hotel, the man they were pursuing turned in there. Antoine took his stand beside the door, while Bernard hastened with utmost rapidity to the other entrance of the hotel in the Rue Rousseau.

Meanwhile Godulowsky—for it was indeed he—strolled nonchalantly into the strange hotel. It is the custom everywhere in the Riviera that one may fully inspect any hotel without being in any way interrogated. The proprietor may perchance be moved thereto by the hope that such inspection may result in a decision in favor of his hotel, as due observation would not fail to remark that in so large a hostelry as the Grand Hotel, with its two entrances, no supervisory control is possible.

Godulowsky hung up his hat in the reading-room, and having spent several minutes in an apparent search for a newspaper, quietly left the room, appropriating, however, another hat, which, as well as his haste would permit, he had already measured with his eye and decided to be the nearest in size to his own.

He now ascended the stairs, walked through the corridor of the first floor, and not finding what he sought, honored the second story with a visit. Before the door of room No. 16 hung a complete outfit, whose owner had left it

there to be brushed. He snatched it and hurried into an empty room beyond.

With a jerk he freed himself from the false beard which he had been wearing and threw aside the glasses. With equal despatch he divested himself of his own clothes and put on the others, which, as it happened, fitted him fairly well, only the trousers being far too long for him, and these he rolled up at the bottom.

As he suspected that both doors were watched, and that the detectives—for that they were such he no longer doubted—would take it for granted that he would make his exit by the other one, he left the hotel by the same door through which he had entered it.

Antoine saw, among several others, a gentleman walk out of the hotel who was a perfect stranger to him, yet concerning whom he had an indefinite suspicion that all was not right. Then his glance fell upon the man's boots, and he knew who stood before him. A little while before, in the *Café de Paris*, he had noticed a spot on the left boot of the stranger opposite, evidently the result of having stepped into a puddle or having been splashed by a passing cart. By this mark he recognized the object of his search, whom he now approached.

Like lightning Godulowsky's hand flew to his pocket, but before he could discharge the revolver which he drew, the detective had struck the weapon from his hand.

Fifteen minutes later Godulowsky was seated in police-headquarters, together with his simultaneously arrested accomplice. The greater part of the money was found to be still upon them.





**A Story of Treasure-trove, by Emily Allison
Townsend. Illustrations by Louise
B. Mansfield ***



THE south wind came rushing over the island, bringing to the ear the dull boom of the breakers. It ruffled the surface of the moorland in dark green waves of bayberry, and twisted the gnarled and scrubby cedars. Nature was in one of those moods where the gray desolation of a winter day seemed to have settled on the land in spring.

In the center of the gloomy moor stood a tumble-down hut. Its broken window panes, stuffed with rags and bleached seaweed, gave the place the appearance of a blind beggar. A worthless boat was stranded in the yard, and on it perched a black cat with wicked yellow eyes.

A cart containing a solitary figure wended its way across the ruts and hummocks of the moor, according to the erratic fancy of the old horse. Suddenly the animal stopped in front of the hut, and no amount of persuasion with voice and whip could induce him to move.

"Gee 'long, Dobbin! What ails thee?" said Hiram Coffin, a strapping young fellow of twenty-two; but Dobbin, with feet firmly planted on solid ground, refused to proceed.

*Written for Short Stories.

"Some of old Sal's work!" muttered the young man, and leaping lightly from his cart, he strode up to the door of the hut and pounded with the handle of his whip on the door. No response came from within. The cat sat licking her chops and looking at Hiram maliciously.

At length he heard a slight commotion inside the hut, a bolt was drawn, and an old, bent woman appeared in the doorway. Patches of every color held her gown together. A pair of



sharp, black eyes, beneath tangled locks, looked keenly at him.

"Please take the spell off my horse, Sal," said Hiram.

"So Tristram's son comes to old Sal for help? Let the pride of the rich be humbled in the dust."

"I never harmed thee," replied the young man.

"The curse shall descend to the second and third generation of them that hate me," said the witch.

"See, I have brought thee a present;" and going to the cart he took out a large basket of cohogs and deposited half of them in a bucket near the door.

Sal entered the house and soon reappeared with a blue Canton pitcher in the design of which snakes, turtles and birds were curiously intermingled. Going three times around the horse, she uttered a strange incantation and the animal relapsed into its usual docility.

While she was absorbed in this procedure, a young girl of seventeen with masses of tawny hair and big brown eyes came to the door. Hiram's blue eyes lighted with pleasure.

"Ain't seen thee in a dog's age, Judy," he said.

"Sal watches me like a cat," replied the girl. "She says the devil is trying to lure my soul to destruction."

"A witch ought to know the whereabouts of that old fellow," said Hiram. "But thee must come to the sheep-shearing to-morrow. We're going to have a bully time."

"I'll come," said Judy, and hastily withdrew, as old Sal came toward the house.

"Begone, young man!" said Sal. "Never let thy shadow fall on this house again. Take care how thou despiseth the witch-woman. The fires of hell shall consume thee."

"Thank thee kindly for thy good wishes, Sal," said Hiram as he jumped into his cart and took his way onward.

Old Sal, in her steeple-crowned hat and long, rusty black cloak, might truly have flown down on a broom-stick from the nearest planet, so little was known about her. The ruined fisherman's hut was found one day to be occupied by her and she proved to have some skill in things supernatural. Ailing horses, cows and sheep quickly regained health by the potent charm of her simple liniments and magic words, aided generally by the uncanny spell of the blue pitcher. Sailors came to bespeak lucky voyages, and lovers to gain her advice. People who consulted her on business were unmolested; but disaster followed those who approached her abode from idle curiosity.

The incongruous companion of the woman's isolation was a beautiful child—probably five years old at the time of the witch's arrival on the island. The girl seemed the embodiment of refinement and daintiness, very different from the sturdy Quaker children of Nantucket.

"A stolen child!" was the comment often heard when the

Quakers spoke of her. When Judy was about seven years old she went to school at the instance of the selectmen.

The teacher asked: "What is thy name, little girl?"

"Judy," replied the child.

"Judith what?" inquired the teacher.

"Just plain Judy—nothing else 'cept Judy," was the answer.

At recess the children romped and played about the yard, while Judy was left to her own devices. Suddenly there was a whispering, with girls' heads close together. Then one little voice piped up, "Judy, the witch's child! The witch's child!"

Finally, a chorus of little voices shouted, "Judy, the witch's child!"

Judy's cheeks grew redder and redder, and her eyes flashed defiance, when suddenly a defender appeared.

"You girls just leave Judy alone. What's the use of being so mean?" said young Hiram Coffin. "If any fellers wants to fight me, come on!" and he took off his jacket.

But no one appeared to accept his challenge. Judy cast a look of gratitude on Hiram, and ever since that day the two had been firm friends.

When Hiram Coffin, the son of the wealthiest ship-owner on Nantucket, championed Judy's cause, the other children decided that it was best not to torment her. After this incident the child, so little accustomed to kindness, regarded Hiram as a hero.

Faith Gardner was Judy's only girl friend. This growing friendship was decidedly frowned upon by Squire Gardner and his wife. They thought that the witch's child could not be a fitting associate for Faith. Neither her parentage nor her environment made the friendship seemly. In vain they remonstrated, and finally concluded that opposition only added fuel to the flame and that it was a species of bewitchment which the child would outgrow. But Faith's friendship was firmly placed.

One day on the way to school Judy met Hiram. After a little talk about teachers and lessons, Hiram said:

"Say, Judy, do you know what's in the blue pitcher? By gummy, I'd like to know what makes it cure sick horses."

"So would I, Hiram."

"Let's find out, Judy, when old Sal's away."

"She's going over the beach to pick up driftwood this afternoon," said Judy. "Come after school."

When Hiram arrived at Sal's, Judy at once ushered him in, and they began to search for the pitcher. Hiram climbed up to the top shelf of the pantry, and was about to seize the pitcher when a step was heard on the door-sill. The boy, terrified, fell to the floor in a heap, and Judy rushed to the door but found no one there. When Hiram tried to stand he discovered that his ankle was sprained. Judy helped him out, and by aid of a chair, he mounted his horse and rode away. He had no sooner gone than Sal appeared.

"Hast thou taken good care of my pitcher?" said the old woman sardonically.

Judy hastened to assure her that she had.

"The foul fiends will take thee, thou child of Ananias!" was the comforting assurance.

A huge brown bear was another of Sal's treasures. A traveling fiddler had come to the island, and, having the sick bear on his hands, was very glad to sell him for a small sum of money. Sal restored the animal to health, and now, led by a chain, it followed her tamely about. The bear proved a terror to naughty children and kept them at a respectful distance, and at the same time served as a beast of burden. It was whispered that people going near the witch's house at night had heard the strains of a fiddle and had seen the shadows of a huge dancing creature—presumably the bear. This seemed conclusive proof to the primitive people that the old woman had sold her soul to the enemy of mankind. Fear kept them at a reasonably safe distance, and so they had the disadvantage of not being able to verify their surmises.

Sheep-shearing day dawned, a typical Nantucket day, full of brightness and the keen joy of life. Great patches of golden flowers gleamed over the moorland. Judy rose early to make her simple preparations for the great day. She looked as fresh as the morning in her clean print gown.

"I'm going to the sheep-shearing, Aunt Sal," she said. "Faith Gardner asked me to come; and to spend the night with her afterward."

Strange to say, the old woman made no decided objection, though she muttered something in reply.

The annual festival took place on Miacomet Plain, surrounded by its chain of ponds. The first two days were occupied with washing of the sheep by the men, and on the last day was the shearing and rebranding. All over the plain glistened white tents, in which tables were spread, and maids and matrons presided with much merriment over the bountiful feasts. When Judy arrived there was a sound of revelry from the tents; for the men had come from shearing the sheep and were at their noonday meal.

Faith Gardner caught sight of her and called out: "Come in here, Judy, if you want to be where the fun is."

Judy saw a table spread with all the good things which the island and mainland could produce in those days, and besides there were viands brought in ships from many foreign countries. Nantucket vessels went to every port in the world, bringing home many strange dainties—confections from the West Indies, rarest teas from the East, and foreign wines of choicest vintage—to be used only on great occasions.

"Here's a place for thee, Judy," said Hiram Coffin, making room for her beside himself.

"The *Nautilus* comes in port this afternoon," said Lovice Macy.

"If she can run the blockade," said Hiram. "We shall sit in darkness, like the heathen, if a little oil is not forthcoming soon."

"Two thousand barrels are aboard her," said Peleg Randall, "and the seed corn we are so much in need of."

"Girls," said Hiram, "we must have the dance to-night, but not a word as big as a huckleberry to anyone. Jonah Ray and I have our plans all made. The town-crier shall announce the ball, if all goes well; but our elders must not know."

"We'll ask the officers of the *Nautilus*," said Faith, "if they are in port in time."

"The town-crier shall be in the secret," continued Hiram. "He will say this evening, as he goes around the town, '*Nautilus* expected, also *Terpsichore*.' We in the secret will know what he means. Now whisper the news to all the other girls and boys."

When evening came great excitement prevailed among the young people. Hiram and Jonah had taken possession of a

large, empty room—the entire second story of a storage building on the wharf. It belonged to Jonah's father, from whom the young man had stolen the key. The floor was scoured and rubbed down until it looked like the deck of a man-of-war. The walls were covered with old sails and flags of many nations. The town-crier perambulated the town at his usual time, ringing his bell and crying:

"Another battle fought! Many killed and wounded—meat sale to-night—*Nautilus* expected—likewise *Terpsichore*—all are invited."

Faith loaned Judy an old pink brocaded satin gown which made her, with powdered hair and a coquettish patch near the corner of her mouth, resemble a beauty of the Court of Louis XVI.

"Indeed, thee quite eclipses me," said Faith, a sweet-tempered, fair-haired girl, who looked very lovely in a pale blue silk over a white satin petticoat.

"What a dear thee is!" said Judy, kissing her.

"Ma," said Faith, coming down the stairs, "we're going over to Mehitable Coffin's for a while; does thee care?"

"Don't get tired at the ball," said Squire Gardner, winking knowingly.

All agreed that the hall was a dream of beauty. Old black Jim, a West Indian negro, scraped the fiddle with great dexterity and presently the room was filled with whirling figures.

As soon as Hiram spied Judy, he rushed toward her, saying: "Come, Judy, the dance is beginning and thee promised to be my partner."

Some of the other girls looked jealously at Judy, for Hiram was considered the most desirable young man of Nantucket.

Judy was having such a beautiful time with Hiram that she did not even see the scornful glances cast toward her. She was determined to be recklessly happy for once in her life, let the consequences be what they might. She danced with spirit and grace. A beautiful color came into her usually pale cheeks and her flashing eyes expressed supreme happiness.

"Thee is the prettiest girl here," said Hiram.

"O flatterer!" replied Judy, "does thee say that to each girl in turn?"

"No," replied Hiram, with a hurt look, "I say it only when I mean it."

"Forgive me, Hiram," said Judy; "I believe thee has been my friend ever since that first day at school. Does thee remember it?"

"Indeed I do. The women are not much nicer to thee than they were then; but we will change all that," he added kindly.

"I would not be here to-night if it were not for Faith Gardner. She is my dear, good friend."

Nothing succeeds like success, and Judy, much to her surprise, soon found herself the belle of the ball.

The *Nautilus* had reached port at about eight o'clock in the evening, and the officers eagerly availed themselves of the invitation to the dance, making gay the scene in their gold-laced uniforms among the severe-looking, drab-colored Quaker youths.

Captain Brandigee danced with Judy, complimented her on her dancing, and asked her if she had learned the art in Paris.

Judy blushed and answered "No." If he only knew about old Sal and her hideous home, thought the girl, bitterly, for a moment; but soon, lost in the delight of the dance, she forgot everything except the pleasure of the hour.

In the meantime, old Sal had passed quite a different day. In the afternoon she had wandered over the beach, picking up driftwood, occasionally lifting her head and drinking in the delicious salt air, mingled with the sweetness of the growing bayberry. She looked out over the rippling blue water. Not a ship was in sight. No human being seemed on the island except herself. The old bear ambled along by her side and she piled her driftwood on his back.

Suddenly she thought she heard a voice. It came apparently from a ruined fisherman's hut on the bank. She listened. From the window a hand beckoned her. She approached; the hand held gold pieces. "They are for you," said the voice.

"Come out, lad," said Sal. "Who art thou?"

A young fellow wearing the dress of an English midddy stood before her astonished gaze.

"The Lord preserve us!" exclaimed Sal.

"Well, old gal, call off your bloomin' bear. My eyes, but hain't you never seen one of his Majesty's sailors afore?"

"What dost thou here, young man?"

"Expectin' a ship, ain't they?" he said in a whisper. "See here," and he held out a handful of gold, with meaning looks first toward the town, then toward the British vessel.

"Put up your money, lad. Vengeance is mine. It's the worm's chance to turn. The worm trampled on for years at last turns and bites the heel of the oppressor."

The man had come ashore from a British cruiser, in a small boat which quickly returned. None of the denizens of Nantucket had seen the ship, though it still hovered not many miles out to sea.

The old town had suffered severely during the days of the Revolution. Its fleets of whalers were almost entirely destroyed, and oil and provisions sometimes were barely obtainable. The British ships, continually on the watch, stood ready at any minute to swoop down on the defenseless people. The Nantucketers managed to signal to the schooners of their own people, and they had been warned, if they gave help to any more ships, their town would be burned. A ship laden with two thousand barrels of oil and a supply of seed corn was expected at Nantucket. The British knew this and the sailor had been sent ashore to investigate.

That evening Sal and the bear meandered down to Candle Alley, where the old woman made a few purchases. Near the corner of Candle Alley and Main Street stood a little shoe-shop,



where the masculine gossips of the town were wont to assemble by night. Here Sal stopped under the side window. The bear very strangely preferred to stand upright, with his ear quite close to the open window, while Sal watched the passersby.

In the store were gathered the village worthies, discussing the war and the likelihood of the expected ships being able to run the blockade.

"They do say as how the *Sary Ann's* been sighted," said the old sailor, Eliphalet Russell, taking his pipe from his mouth and expectorating with sure aim into the smoldering wood-fire. "We must hail Capt'n Ray somehow or t'other. The saucy *Nautilus* ran in right under the Britishers' noses; but the *Sary Ann's* a blamed slow ship, and Capt'n Ray ain't so cussed daring."

"I appint thee a committee, Liflet—thee and Moses—to make a signal fire on the south shore to-morrow night. Squire Gardner's had private word that the *Sary Ann's* coming then," said Hosea Macy, "and he must let her know the coast's clear or the contrary. We can't afford to lose all that good West Indy rum and merlasses."

The two listeners at these words moved quickly away. The bear still walking upright strode along quite in advance of the old woman.

Instead of remaining all night with Faith, Judy decided to return to the house on the moor, having an undefined feeling of coming disaster. Hiram brought her home in his cart at about eleven o'clock; for the Quaker people kept early hours. As noiselessly as possible she entered the house, taking care not to awaken Sal, whose heavy breathing she heard.

But Judy could not sleep; the excitement of the evening kept her awake and her mind wandered over the happenings of the day. Suddenly she heard a groan from the old woman in the next room. The girl, thinking that she was ill, hastened to her and heard her mutter in her sleep.

"At one o'clock—high tide, they're coming—the Britishers!" Judy started and listened, her eyes open wide with horror. "The spy is on the beach and will make the signal fire."

Judy's first thought was of Hiram—how to get word to him! She looked for the lantern; it was gone.

With wildly beating heart she rushed from the house—on

and on in the darkness. She hurried along the narrow streets, and stopped before a big square brick house.

She pounded vigorously with the brass knocker and Hiram's voice from the window above called, "Who's there?"

"It's Judy, Hiram! Dress and come down as quickly as possible!" she said breathlessly.

In a few minutes he appeared.

"Why, my girl, what is it?" he inquired, as the light from the window fell on the excited face.

"The British attack the town in an hour! A spy is on the beach, ready to give the signal. He must be taken prisoner before he can reach his ship!"

Hiram at once aroused several of his neighbors, and without waiting to saddle their horses, they rode swiftly to the beach.

The sailor stood near a signal fire waiting impatiently for his ship to put off a boat. The noise of the surf drowned the sound of the approaching men, who soon overpowered the sailor and put out the fire. During this time the church bells had been ringing furiously, summoning all able men to arms. The home guard assembled in great haste on the docks, but no British came that night.

The next day old Sal was suspected of treachery. Little Amasa Gardner had seen her walking with the bear. What attracted the boy's attention was that the animal went quite comfortably on two legs and talked like a man. An old bear skin was found in the fisherman's hut on the beach and was recognized as Sal's winter bedspread.

The High Court of the Colony convened to try Sal on the charge of witchcraft and treason. She was pronounced guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The law did not take its course, however, for the excitement and anxiety as to her fate proved too much for the old woman, and she was found dead in her bed on the morning set for the execution.

The mystery of Judy's parentage always remained unsolved; but among the witch's effects was found a small leather case embossed with a gilt crest. It contained two miniatures painted on ivory—one of a beautiful girl whom Judy greatly resembled, and the other a very handsome and distinguished-looking man. That they were the portraits of Judy's father and mother there could be little doubt.

After examining Sal's belongings, Hiram said:

"Well, Judy, thee is evidently the daughter of some noble and aristocratic family in England."

"Old Sal must have stolen me in revenge for some injury. She could be vindictiveness itself."

"My poor girl, how thee must have suffered! I want to



make it up to thee, if I can. My name is not noble, but honored and respected in this island. Will thee accept it as thy name? I have always loved thee better than anything else in the world."

"Yes," said Judy blushing, "I accept it because I love thee."

"My brave girl, the town would be in ashes but for thee. By the way, bring out that curious old pitcher. Does thee remember our childish curiosity about it?"

"I hate it!" declared Judy; "Sal knew it and always tauntingly said it would be mine when she was dead. The brown bear and the blue pitcher and all they represent have been the unspeakable trials of my life."

She went to the cupboard and took down the pitcher.

"I can't endure the sight of it," she said, and with these words she dashed the pitcher to the ground. To her astonishment out rolled a shower of gold pieces—old Spanish doubloons, Dutch guelders, English florins and good money of Louis XIV.

"To think old Sal treasured all this wealth for me!" exclaimed Judy, after she had recovered from her surprise. "I fear I have done her great injustice. I thought she hated me."

"Peace to her ashes," said Hiram, solemnly. "The blackness of her treason is redeemed. She atoned to the best of her ability—to thee, at least," he added, with a look of affection.

"Her love for me shall be a mantle of charity to cover all her sins," declared Judy contritely.





WITH the Red Heavies:

The Story of a Love Affair,

by Charles Edwardes*



THEY were nicknamed the Red Heavies because of their jackets and red busbies. The jackets were frogged with yellow; otherwise sealing-wax wasn't in it with them from the waist upwards, as a coarse critic once said of them. Some one else (a lady) declared that the name was no nickname at all, but a concise (colored) description of the quality of their brains. She referred only to the officers of the regiment. But that was before little Popper joined—little Popper with the pale-blue eyes, and flaxen moustache with its ends ironed upwards strenuously, and an eyeglass.

This was a revolution, at least. To Major Grandison Lee, the heaviest in weight of all the Red Heavies, it seemed to bode anarchy and ultimate dissolution. This, too, quite apart from Peter Popper's defiance of the regimental tradition in not shaving clean. From the Colonel downwards, hitherto, for tens of years, not an officer of the Red Heavies, while in the regiment, had worn a hair to his face below the nose. Even when wounded, it was a sacred law that he should be shaved as regularly as his dresser came to him with the bandages.

The Major was distressed and angry. "Why, the lad's a marionette," he said to Captain Galway one evening, some little time after Popper's introduction to his comrades. Popper himself was chaffing the Colonel by the fireplace, with one foot on a chair and his elbow resting on his knee; and the Colonel (a six-footer) was smiling down at him while he screened him completely from the fire. "A little German doll, sir! I tell you what, Galway, if this is the stuff they're forced to send us, the service is at the lower end of Queer Street, and no mistake. Any one would think we were a

*From Chambers's Journal.

nation of pygmies, if he's a sample. What's the Colonel thinking about, Galway? That's the riddle I want solved." The Major drew in a breath that seemed immeasurable.

"He has a heap of shekels," said Captain Galway dryly.

"Ah!" The Major let out a little breath as he sighed, and shrugged. He had few shekels, and several younger brothers and sisters whose paths in life were not yet plain.

"And he's got his head screwed on all right, if you ask me, Lee. Why—but you're not a speculating chap!"

"Head screwed on? I dare say. The question is, was it worth his father's and mother's while to screw it on at all? However, it's no use *my* talking. If we're doomed to become a second-rate Power, words won't alter it. But—what do you mean by saying I'm not a speculating chap?"

Captain Galway seemed to regret something. He made a noise with his tongue as if to hint that he had forgotten a matter that demanded attention. "I must have a look at that new nag of mine," he said, moving.

But the other's grasp was on his arm.

"Wait a bit," said the Major earnestly. "I'm in the dark. I *have* had the glimmering of an idea that things were happening about which I was an outsider. You said 'speculating.' Do you mean that that young jackanapes is poisoning your minds with infernal passions of that kind?"

Captain Galway shrugged. "That's piling it on, old man," he said.

"Then it's so?"

"Well, seeing that a rose by any other name would still smell sweet, we won't quarrel over an adjective. It is a fact that Popper's folks are very wide awake about City matters, and—there's no harm in telling you that I for one made a cool couple of hundred on Thursday. One of the little chap's tips—Stock Exchange, you know! But, Jovel Lee, what's up with you?"

The Major's eyes wore their battle-look, and the mighty hand that now hung by his side clenched its fingers. "And the Colonel?" he whispered, twany-red with excitement, perhaps even with shame.

"Don't be such an idiotic Puritan," muttered Captain Galway testily. "Where's the objection? He'd have been only too happy to do you the good turn as well if we'd supposed for a moment you—. Oh, you know what I'm driv-

ing at. It's the deuce of a pity that you should be always so short, and then your—high moral tone—and all that. The Colonel did pretty well too: rather better than fifteen hundred, I believe. But excuse me now, my dear fellow; and—don't be hard on us."

The Captain smiled. There was a dash of depreciation and a dash of something else in the smile that moved the Major even more effectually: the pity of comparative opulence for poverty. Having administered this salve, the Captain flicked some cigar-ash from his right spur and went off singing.

Then the Major sat down to challenge his emotions. The words "idiotic Puritan" were still ringing in his ears.

Was he that? Perhaps. Yes. No. By heaven, no! a thousand times No, in this matter. That glib talk of Galway's about winning hundreds of pounds in a day as simply as signing one's name had *not* aroused his envy. With but one extra hundred pounds he could see his way clear to getting Lawrie coached for that F. O. exam.—coached right away into the first half-dozen or so on the list, and given a career for life. Yet he would not take it at the price which the Colonel, Galway, Fanshaw, Bissell—and the others also, apparently—did not shrink from paying. He would not, indeed.

The Colonel's hand on his shoulder aroused him.

"Anything wrong, Lee?"

"Wrong?" The Major met the Colonel's twinkling dark eyes and—suppressed himself. The odds against him were too great at present. "Some fancies!" he added. "I was thinking about the boy Lawrence. You know I've told you he's working up for the Foreign Office."

The Colonel nodded cheerfully. "That's all right," he said. "I'll back him to pull through. You are such a chap to worry, Lee. Always thinking of some one else instead of yourself—*nearly* always, that is."

The pressure he gave to the Major's shoulder and the twitch of his lips at the corners referred to one of these exceptional times. It was that memorable occasion—recorded in the archives of the regiment—when Grandison Lee had tackled three hillmen of the East with his own sword, and polished them off before Major Reed, as he then was, could stagger to his assistance. The Major had a bullet in the elbow. "I'll manage them. Stay where you are!" Grandison Lee said imperatively. It was like his confounded,

high-principled cheek. But he *did* manage them, in less than a dozen strokes of cut-and-thrust; and the present Colonel Reed never forgot it, and often laughingly said that he would never forgive him either.

The Major and subaltern Popper were alone in the room, the latter with his back to the former, straightening one end of his moustache, and whistling over the agreeable pastime. The sight was too much for Grandison Lee. His earlier prejudice against the new-comer returned five-fold as he looked at Popper's thin, yellowish scalp with its broad parting—almost as much parting as hair. To think of it! Such an object as that to thrust itself like an evil spirit, certainly as an element of decadence, into the mess that had so far done nothing to tarnish the good name of the famous Red Heavies! "Popper!"

The Major bridled his indignation very fairly. He was bound to give the little image its chance, anyway.

"Hullo, Major! *You* there still?" The "marionette" turned round sharply, with an air of perfect good humor and confidence. "By Jove! what a conceited ass you'll think me! Fact is, if these few sunbeams of mine once get away from each other, I look such a guy I'd be sorry to be about on a Fifth of November. Union's strength, they tell us. *In re* my moustache, it's the only saving clause; I'd be an ugly little beggar if I didn't keep 'em packed together. Expect I'll have to fall into line with you other fellows and shave yet. Must let myself down gently, though, a bristle at a time, or so. Reminds me, there's a certain girl—"

The Major coughed hoarsely and raised his hand. That shut up Peter Popper.

"Yes, sir?" he said, straightening himself.

"Er—this is between ourselves, Popper," said the Major tensely. "I may be somewhat old fashioned, but I can't help believing that money-making and fighting are two separate and even antagonistic occupations. I'm afraid—"

"One moment, Major," interposed the youngster briskly. "If you knew how vexed I was to leave you out in the cold in that Delaroo corner last week! The other chaps kept me off. They said you wouldn't touch anything of that kind with a pair of tongs, wouldn't think it the correct thing, and so on; and so I didn't like—dare, I mean, you know. I was *frightfully* sorry. But I tell you what, old man, if you'll

let me, the next whisper I get from my people, you shall run for the profits and I'll risk the losses. *Apropos*, I don't know if you've noticed a grig of a girl about the place since last Tuesday, casting intellectual sheep's eyes at—"

"By gad, sir, hold your tongue!" cried Grandison Lee, starting to his feet.

"Major!"

The subaltern stood away a pace or two. He seemed acutely astonished. "What have I done?" he continued, like a doubtful schoolboy, staring at the Major in his wrath.

The answer came in deep tones:

"There is such a thing as the *honor* of the regiment. I am sorry to say it, but you are a cad, sir; and if my influence can do it, you shall not be one of us long. You are a contamination, sir. And now I'll thank you to relieve me of your company. I've more important things to think about."

"A cad!"

The youngster jumped as if a bayonet had been run into him behind. He stared and stared. "Honor of the regiment!" he murmured, frowning as if he were trying to digest the phrase. He seemed to succeed, too. "Oh!" he gasped, with quite a different quality in the stare which he still fixed upon his insulter.

"I repeat, I am sorry to feel obliged to speak my mind. What I meant was that nothing but a degrading, caddish impulse could have led you to presume—yes, presume, sir—to address me as if for one moment I—. But there! I've had enough of it. You've sickened me. Pray go, unless you particularly wish to be indoors here just now."

Popper brightened considerably.

"All right, I'll go," he said cheerfully. "I begin to catch on too. Perhaps soon I'll see all there is to be seen. But—'cad!' And yet—. Well, anyway, Major Lee, you're a gentleman, and so there can't be a duel between us about it."

He left the room, nodding to himself. The Major had an instant attack of remorse. He wanted to call him back and apologize, but something restrained him. He believed that he had said and done no more than his duty demanded. Nevertheless, he was not properly satisfied with himself. It was as if he had put his foot on a butterfly merely because the poor little flutterer a moment or two before had dared to spread its wings between his eyes and the sun.

For the rest of that day the Major felt uneasy. A nervous dread seized him lest Popper should tell the others what he had said to him. The honor of the regiment, forsooth! Who was he, when all was estimated, that he should set himself up as high priest of the cult of this same honor? He knew just how his comrades would feel in the matter. They would laugh and chuckle and say, "Poor old Lee! Just like him!" and so on; and in their hearts they would designate him a confounded old prig. They would try, perhaps, to maintain the familiar friendly footing, for old times' sake; but they would also realize that he had overstepped the mark, and had done for himself as one of themselves in spirit and in truth.

He worried himself desperately with these and kindred fancies; and, as salt on the wounds of his worries, that longing to give Lawrie every possible chance of a billet for life grew and grew. A mere hundred pounds—and the Colonel had gained fifteen times as much by a stroke of the pen and the lack of all high-falutin notions about human nature!

Yet the day passed much like other days at Baddenham, and it ended with three-penny whist at the Union Club; and no one except young Popper seemed any different with him.

At half-past eleven the Major was helped into his coat by some one in the hall of the club. It was rather a clumsy some one, too, so that he turned with a smile as well as thanks to see which of the members was playing the amiable for the first time or so in his life. But it was neither the town clerk nor Chesling the rich provision factor; no, nor a new servant either. It was sub-Lieutenant Popper, with confusion in his eyes.

"Sorry, sir. You are such a dashed height!" murmured little Popper as he snatched at his cane.

Then the Major knew what Fate exacted of him. He waited for little Popper, and they walked back to quarters together; and on the way he recanted those earlier words of his, almost to the very last of them.

"I'm downright ashamed of myself, Popper, and that's the truth," he said finally. "One never knows, I suppose, what outrage one is capable of until the precise—er—sort of temptation necessary—faces one. I'd like the assurance of your forgiveness, if you don't mind."

Little Popper had made a variety of spasmodic noises and

exclamations designed to check the Major in his outpouring. Now, however, when he had his opportunity, he seemed at a loss. All he could get out was this: "I say, Major, don't talk like that."

"But I disgraced myself, Popper. I called you a cad."
"And I called you a gentleman, Major; and I may have meant it for irony, and that's beastly bad form at any time," urged little Popper.

"We were both wrong, then," said the Major.

"You weren't, sir. But—it's awfully good of you. It's what any fellow would expect of you, I expect. I've been reading up the article on 'honor' in the club's *Encyclopædia*, and it squares with what you said—that is, if you read between the lines. I only wish—. But it's never much good wishing. I do know, though, that I'll sleep better for what you've just said."

The Major lowered his hand to get at the sub's arm; and in silence, thus looped, they walked the remaining distance to barracks. If the lamp-posts thought the spectacle a mirthful one, they kept their thoughts to themselves.

The officers of the Red Heavies were not only a clean-shaven set of men, and—barring Popper—great in bone and sinew; they were also as good as sworn bachelors. So rumor ran, without telling a lie of the usual size. This tradition, like others of the regiment, had come down from the comparatively remote past. It was often discussed over the wine as a capital joke. At other times it was accepted as an inevitable detail of the regimental life. Officers of other regiments were in danger wherever there was a pretty woman to lay snares for them in the conventional way. This kind of incense left the Red Heavies unmoved in their circumstances. They were not uniformly stolid in the matter; sometimes, indeed, they had earnest little flirtations, due to great determination on the part of the lady and the man's temporary weakness; but marriage was out of the question. A word from the Colonel, and it was all up with the fair conspirator's ambitions.

So it had been for quite thirty-five years.

Of all the Red Heavies, too, no one seemed less likely to run counter to custom in this particular than Major Grandison Lee. As a rule, he was too trying a fortress for any lady to besiege for more than an hour or two. He met the warmest

direct advances with ice, ice, ice: there was no end to the ice he had at command. Life was too short for any lady to attempt to thaw him until *he* might tire. It was generally understood that he was a most dutiful son to his old mother, and an unusually affectionate brother to his sisters. But to the rest of the world such information, taken by itself, was not exciting. Of all the officers of the Red Heavies, therefore, Grandison Lee was least troubled by the serious attentions of the fair sex.

Yet on the day after his imbroglio and reconciliation with young Popper, something happened to give point to the Colonel's inquiry at dinner that evening: "By the way, Popper, you must mind what you are doing. I suppose *you* introduced Lee to that charming sister of yours?"

Young Popper did not raise his eyebrows like certain of the others. He looked quickly at the Major and smiled, sedately for him. "She's my *half*-sister, sir," he explained; "and it was awfully good of Lee to take her off my hands as far as those Bailey folk by the Park. I had to introduce him. She almost trod on his toes turning a corner—didn't she, Major?"

"Really, I don't remember that," said the Major. "I thought it was you, Popper. But—"

"Oh, Major, Major!" exclaimed three voices at once.

"Don't be silly!" said the Major. "And, Colonel, I think I may say that Miss Riddell would not have been troubled by *my* escort if Popper hadn't put it out of her power to—er—accept an alternative!"

"Question!" cried young Popper. "That is, old man"—for he and they all marked with surprise the Major's evident disquietude—"I know she wouldn't really, if you want to have it put so impolitely."

"What did you say she's worth?" asked Captain Galway, feigning to be quite casual, while he stripped a banana.

"Eighty thousand, the poor dear! And a bounder of the name of Stiles won't leave her alone. He's a dogcake-maker; and because his father invites a few broken-backed lords to shoot his covers he thinks himself irresistible. She's said 'No' to him three times. The next time I hope she'll pull his ears. She's come down here with the 'mater' for a fortnight to try to get a rest from him."

It was curious to see with what avidity these Red Heavies

listened to young Popper's words. But the Colonel, as well as Major Lee, had had enough of the subject.

"That will do, Popper," he said. "I can't allow you to continue unsettling our minds. Your half-sister is charming, as I have said, and so we leave her."

But the Major was disturbed for a considerable time longer, in spite of his endeavors to comport himself as usual. With good cause, too. Popper's half-sister had at first appealed to him merely like any other young lady of twenty-two or twenty-three, with tender gray eyes and a ready smile. Probably the dappled sunlight under those beech trees of the avenue made her look prettier than she really was. It didn't matter much anyway. What did matter was the tone she adopted towards him as soon as Popper had slipped away, after a look at his watch, an expletive of annoyance, and mention of an engagement at the Imperial Hotel.

"I do so want to say something to you, Major Lee," she began when they were alone. It was then that he noticed her face more particularly. She was blushing like a boy, and she had clasped his hand, too, with the honest grip of a boy.

"To me?" he had replied, with rather less ice to his words than the contingency required.

"Yes. Peter has been telling us how splendidly you have been lecturing him, and both my mother and I think it noble of you."

She shot out her words like a boy in his younger teens.

The Major was startled, and the more he looked at those sunny gray eyes and the tell-tale cheeks the more he was startled. He begged her pardon; had she not made a mistake?—and so forth.

But there was no mistake at all, from her point of view, as the Major himself soon had to admit—not without mortification, seeing that it was now *his* turn to blush. *His* blushes were of the tawny kind, yet not to be disguised any more than hers.

"Money is so debasing," she said simply, "and you are the first man who has said anything to him, Major Lee, about ideals of a loftier kind. It is glorious for him to be in a regiment like the Red Heavies, and I'm sure he ought not to have any time for those horrid Stock Exchange transactions which are his father's business. That is what I meant."

She was a little less like a boy now. A high-spirited and

lovely girl, rather; so lovely, indeed, that the Major could no longer look at her without feelings which had for years and years been anathema to him.

"You are making a great deal out of nothing, Miss Riddell," he said, forcing a raucous laugh.

"No," said she, "I do not think so. And you don't think it either."

Had she been an ordinary girl he would have settled her with a dry rigmarole beginning, "But, my dear young lady," and she would soon have said her "Good afternoon." But there was an ethereal light in her eyes now which raised her far above the crowd.

"I—was unpardonably rude to your brother," he said lamely.

"Yes, but it was for his good; and, coming from a man like you, and one of his senior brother-officers, it was quite the most generous thing you *could* do."

She had changed again. Her eyes met his frankly and reasoned with him as man to man. It was amazing and more startling than before.

The Major had never yet met this kind of young woman. "But perhaps you are not aware that I called him a—cad, Miss Riddell?" he protested. If his life depended on it, he could have no reservations with *her* in this matter.

"Yes; and you were right to call him one. I don't say he is one, for he isn't at heart. But some men are just like children, and it's only when they get their ears boxed by the right person that they see how unworthily they have been behaving. It *was* caddish of him to suppose that you were angry with him because you had not made money like the others."

"Miss Riddell!" he had exclaimed, unconsciously striking a majestic attitude.

But she was wound up, just like a full-blooded boy after a college cricket match, with the win on his side. She shook her head in an "I-know-all-about-it" manner.

"Yes, Major Lee. Peter told me how you'd take it. He said it was like my cheek when I told him I *would* speak to you, and thank you; but he doesn't really mind, I think. I've seen such a very great deal of the demoralizing side of mere money-making. My own father—and then Peter's uncle *and* his father—. But I think you have had enough of me and the subject. It's a painful one."

She gave him a very intimate smile, with a gleam of sadness in it, and offered him her hand. It was a small hand, daintily gloved in lavender-colored kid.

The Major glanced at it, then again at her face, and—positively he trembled. He did not take her hand, but in the fulness of his humiliation proceeded to explain.

"You make me ashamed of myself, Miss Riddell," he said quietly. "Do let me tell you what I should be sorry to tell any other living being—well, suppose we say except my old mother. You have been imputing it to me as a virtue that I called your brother an abominable name. What will you think of me when I confess to you—in confidence or not, as you please—that an hour or two afterwards I was possessed by unholy envy of what seemed to me the luck of the other men? I said to myself, 'Why wasn't I in it?' And so on."

"Well?" said she, glowing with triumph, and in the wretched Major's eyes too beautiful now for mortal man to look at.

"That's all," said he, feeling abject.

"Yes, but," she cried, seeming almost as if she were about to put her hand on his arm, "how dull you are, Major Lee! You miss the point. You were tempted, but resisted; whereas—"

"I am afraid that is not quite a true statement of the case," he interposed.

"It's near enough, Major Lee."

"I don't see it, Miss Riddell."

She shook her head and smiled the serene smile that proceeds from instinct the infallible. He, anxious only to have done with heroics and to divert her from them too, tried hard to be and appear solidly matter-of-fact.

"I think, too, that it's going to rain soon," he added bluntly, looking at a very innocent young cloud above the spire of St. Eric's Church.

Then she laughed brightly, as if she were now about to enjoy herself thoroughly, without responsibilities.

"I don't," she said. "But I will not bore you any more. I was to say from my mother, and Peter's—if we did meet you, that is, as Peter said we should," she added in rather a disturbed parenthesis—"she would be glad to see you if you cared to call. And now good-by, and thank you so much for your patience. Peter said you were the soul of chivalry, Major Lee, and I've found you so. Good-by."

He felt like stooping and gently raising that little lavender-gloved hand to his lips. Worse still, he understood what the yearning indicated. At his mellow age and with his autumnal prospects! For a moment or two he could not be his unemotional self. Then, with a stern effort, he recovered control of his routine faculties. "I shall be delighted, Miss Riddell," he said, in a sort of faint echo of his field-day voice. "May I ask where Mrs. Popper is residing?"

"Hasn't he told you?" she asked gaily. "I *could* show you if you would let me. It is only a little way past that odd Jubilee fountain—Regent House. But I know you detest the— That is, Peter says you are all woman-haters. I think you are right, too, in a sense. To a real soldier we must seem intolerable little circumstances, like dust-specks in the eye, and that kind of thing."

Was she laughing at him? And did she or did she not beckon him with her eyes as well as her tongue? These were the futile questions the Major discussed with himself when they had parted and he was alone amid a world of golden memories.

Regent House was a large, square white mansion, with statues on its roof-line; a little palace, if he might judge from its exterior. But that was nothing. He would have been quite as much or as little impressed if she had pointed to No. 299 in a street of two-storied, red, jerry-built tenements, all alike, with their thirty square feet of grass-plot between the iron wicket and the door, and with a milkman ladling milk at No. 297 while a dustman heaved the rubbish of No. 296 into his cart to windward of the milk. It was the temple which for the time being she inhabited. That was enough for him.

He scarcely remembered what had passed during that walk with her of less than ten minutes' duration. She did the talking. Mrs. Popper suffered slightly from rheumatism—she had told him that. It was one reason why they were at Baddenham—for the baths, of course. But he recalled certain of her words with curious eagerness. "Do you know, Major Lee," she had said, "you were the first of Peter's brother-officers my mother and I happened to see after coming here. We were with Mrs. Hepburn, the doctor's wife, and she pointed you out. Both of us felt that Peter would do splendidly if they were all like you." Then it was "Good-by" once

more, and the old gray cloud of the routine life descended upon him. He had never before realized the burden of an existence without domestic hopes of the peculiarly personal kind. And the golden memories of ten minutes, half an hour, an hour ago eddied about him as if to emphasize the grayness of his past which was his present also.

That little annoyance at dinner by-and-by was an annoyance to him really only in so far as it drew him roughly from his dreams. He had tremendous compensation shortly afterwards, considering it from one aspect. This was when little Popper came up to him with a clownish kind of simper and an apology.

"We *are* pals again, aren't we, Major?" he inquired.

"I hope so, my boy," replied the Major.

"That's all right, then," said little Popper. "It was jolly rough dumping Polly Riddell on you like that this afternoon, and I was thundering sorry for you, old man. But the girls will have their own way, as the sexton of my governor's parish church says when a beaming bride drags another reluctant bridegroom up the aisle. She's very much gone on you, if you care to know!"

They were in the barrack-yard at the time. The Major liked to smoke a solitary cigar by the moonlight, watching the men come and go, and listening to the movements of the stalled chargers. His orderly had brought out a camp-stool for him, and set it against the red barrack-wall opposite the stables. Thus sitting, he had let his thoughts return to Popper's half-sister. Not that they wanted much letting.

"She *is*," said the little subaltern, as if encouraged by the Major's silence. He did not see the quiver that shook the Major from head to foot. "She's not half bad when you understand her. She wanted to know you frightfully. Rum things—girls! But I told her we Heavies haven't any spare moments for women—a nobler goal is ours, and so on—and that she might as well set her cap at Nelson on the Monument as at you or any of us. What do you think she said to that, old chap?"

The Major passed his hand across his brow, then looked at little Popper under the moonlight.

"What have you had to drink since dinner, Popper?" he asked, a trifle wearily.

"Me? To drink? Oh, a whiskey-and-soda, and then

another one. There may have been another after that; I forget. But don't be savage with a fellow, Lee. What's the use? What do you think she said when I said she might as well try to get made love to by St. Simon Stylites himself, or whatever his beastly long name was, on *his* column? What?"

The Major stood up and closed his camp-stool. "I must write a letter," he said. "My young brother Lawrence—but I have probably already told you about him, Popper—he's a bitshaky in his tongues. I want him to be in Paris for a month or so."

He was going, when the subaltern grabbed him by the arm.

"Don't snub a fellow so per—persistently, Leel" he exclaimed. "What's the good? Hitting him when he's down, and all that, and such a little chap, too! Ha! ha! Good that. I know all about your brother; every fellow in the regiment knows about him by heart. It's a stock joke—in a friendly way, of course, Major. But I want to know if you want to know what Polly said when I told her that. You'd *like* to know. You'd feel comfortable then; especially though—no, because—oh, bother! Anyhow, that stuffed owl of a Stiles is still in the running. He'll be down here to-morrow in full cry again."

"I'd get off to bed, Popper, if I were you," said the Major. "It's a poor show to be like this."

"*What* did she say, I'm asking you?" cried the little subaltern. "Can't you answer a chap civilly?"

Then the Major gave way to his desire. "What?" he whispered.

"She said," replied little Popper, marking the words in the air with the other hand, "that she was glad of it, because then she could talk to you on what she calls a common-sense footing. Common-sense, she said. And so, old man, you may take it from me that she said a lot of rot, whatever she said."

"Good-night, Popper," said the Major; "and thank you."

Grandison Lee called on Mrs. Popper, in keeping with his promise to Mary Riddell. But he was in no hurry about it, as he might have been had not Peter Popper let the cat out of the bag after those superfluous whiskeys-and-sodas. Ere he pulled the bell at Regent House, he had throttled the

very last of his illusions about Mary Riddell. At least he thought so. He flattered himself it was easy enough, too, considering he had seen the girl only once.

Nevertheless he was very nervous when the footman ushered him into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Popper's welcome was of the warmest. "This is sweet of you, Major," she exclaimed. Her hand almost clung to his. Perhaps it was a mark of her kinship with Mary; perhaps it meant nothing. She was a large lady, with much jewelry about her, evidently a stately person when she chose to be so. "We were so dreadfully afraid you were some one else," she added, with a most encouraging countenance.

Then the Major turned to Mary Riddell, and his courage failed him. She was all, and more, than he had thought her. Was there a smile in all the world to match hers? "Good afternoon," he said, in his hardest and most frigid tone.

But she did not shrink in the least. She looked her gladness calmly, and again gave him a boyish hand-clasp which thrilled him to the heart.

"I thought your principles had *compelled* you to neglect us," she said.

It was no good. In her presence he forgot everything except the pleasure of the moment. He felt like a criminal whenever he tried, feebly enough, to rally himself into a condition of ordinary insensitiveness to the charms of woman-kind. It was easier to be natural, and far more comfortable.

Mrs. Popper soon mentioned her gratitude in the matter of Peter. It was soon over too.

"Don't, mother!" said Mary Riddell. "I gave Major Lee as much of that kind of physic as he could take. He'll never call on us again if we keep worrying him about it."

"Very well, my dear," said Mrs. Popper. "I owed it to myself. Much as I love my son, Major, I would really rather talk about this County Ball."

"Ball? Oh, of course! I remember," he murmured.

Before he knew anything else definitely, he had not only promised to go to the ball, but also to dance the first dance with Mrs. Popper. She had asked him point blank. He was quite simple in confessing afterwards that he did not, as a rule, go to balls; hated them, in fact.

He felt dazed, ridiculous, yet blindly happy. All the while he listened to commonplaces, and talked them, he was

living his real life apart with the face of this blithe and lovely girl which said so much to him with its eyes alone.

So it went on, all too quickly, until there came a distraction.

"That's his ring; I feel sure it is!" cried Mrs. Popper, almost as if she were in despair, when the bell pealed loudly. "Upon my word, I don't know what some young men are made of. I dare say you know him, Major, by this time: Albert Stiles. He——"

"Never mind that, mother," said Mary Riddell laughing. "If I dared, I would ask Major Lee to help me to seek cover in the conservatory in a minute or two. There's a wonderful cactus——"

"Anything I can do for you—anything!" he said, with grave alacrity.

"Would you? Oh, how good of you! In five minutes. Not more," she whispered.

The footman appeared, and Mr. Stiles after him. This young gentleman had been told, in the plainest language, that Mrs. Popper and Mary were only at home on Thursdays, and yet he had called every afternoon since his arrival in Baddenham, on the chance, as he said. There had been passages-at-arms with the footman about him; but of course nobody wanted a scene, and Albert Stiles was free with his money, as well as determined and artful where Mary was concerned. He tried to make love as his father had made a fortune in dogcakes, by forcing these down the throats of the dogs of the public. His father's appropriate and favorite maxim, "It's dogged as does it!" was his also, as touching Mary Riddell.

Now the Major *had* already met Mr. Albert Stiles. For the fun's sake, so he said, Popper had brought him to a mess-dinner. But there wasn't much fun in it for any one. Young Stiles could be the most ordinary young man in the world on occasion, and he soon made the Red Heavies yawn in spite of themselves. He condescended to talk horses to them, and parried Popper's sallies with considerable craft. There was not a laugh in or about him from the soup to the coffee, and every one was thankful when Popper took him away.

To the Major, after due contemplation, it seemed a monstrous thing that such a bladder-headed radish of a youth should think it possible Mary Riddell could love him. He was a mere wisp of a fellow, with a moustache trained like

Popper's, only black instead of flaxen. But to-day the Major shook young Stiles's hand heartily. He felt almost as if he could excuse any man anything. He nursed his knee and smiled pensively, and listened to the neat little duel of words between Mrs. Popper and Albert Stiles with quite a relish.

Mrs. Popper was determined not to mince matters with the young man.

"Didn't you observe, Mr. Stiles, that the *Thursday* on my card was underlined?" she asked severely. "We are going out directly."

"I can't help dropping in, Mrs. Popper," said Albert Stiles, with his eyes on Mary.

"Yes, yes; but you ought to know better. What would your own mother say if Peter, for example, took such liberties with her?"

Albert Stiles made his score with a grin which really suited his excellently tight cornstalks of legs, scarlet necktie, and cut-throat collar. "She'd be jolly thankful," he replied. "She likes Peter."

Mrs. Popper generously spared him the retort which he invited.

"Well, I don't think I shall even ask you to sit down," she said. "Major Lee is different. He is here on business, if he will allow me to say so." This with a graciousness towards the Major which was cruel in the circumstances.

"Business!" exclaimed Albert Stiles, with a slight frown. "It's business with a decent amount of pleasure to it then. And anyhow, Mrs. Popper, you can't turn me out. I'll leave when the Major does. I may stay that long, Miss Riddell, mayn't I?"

There was no more of him than this.

Mary Riddell rose and shook her head at him compassionately. "I think you are the most foolish individual I know," she said quietly. "But perhaps he is tired, mamma, and wants a rest. If you will be very good, my mother will humor you so far. Shall I *show* you that—wonderful cactus now, Major Lee?"

The Major was on his feet in an instant. "I should like to see it immensely," he said.

"And in ten minutes, my dear, I shall put on my bonnet," said Mrs. Popper.

Mary Riddell nodded an airy "Adieu" to Albert Stiles.

"Oh, but——" he began protestingly. Mrs. Popper, however, stifled the forthcoming indiscretion by inquiring what he paid for the flowers he was so absurdly extravagant in sending daily to Regent House; and before the question was answered Mary and the Major were in the other drawing-room, with the conservatory beyond.

"This is better," she said, facing him pleasantly the moment the glass door was shut upon them. "Do you think I was too harsh with him?"

"Too harsh! I—surely that depends, Miss Reddill. You didn't *look* harsh."

She folded her hands behind her head, and, standing in a frame, as it were, of orange-blossom, gazed at Grandison Lee with that earlier wholly confiding freedom which had wrought such havoc on him.

"That's what I like about the Red Heavies!" she said quickly. "You are all above the nonsense one expects and gets from other men."

"How so?" he asked, determined to keep calm.

"Oh, about marrying. I assure you, Major Lee, speaking as one disinterested human being to another, it's not to be believed how a girl with a little money has her own aspirations badgered out of her by that—that tiresome presentiment of courtship. Whenever I am introduced to a gentleman I have to start weighing him up instead of just being spontaneously civil. How is one to know what his aims are? It seems that even one's smiles—poor plain little things!—may do a great deal of mischief quite innocently. You see what I mean?"

An Arctic wind had swept over the Major's heart. The conservatory was warm, but he had become very cold. "Yes, I believe I see what you mean," he said. "And yet——"

Suddenly a fierce passion of revolt against the restraints of his circumstances followed that Arctic gust. This radiant and adorable girl smiled at him and talked to him as if he were a milestone by the roadside; and she thought him nothing better, as touching his sensibilities. What he said he said, and even afterwards he could not bring himself greatly to regret it.

"And so, Miss Riddell," he ended, "you see that you have, quite unknowingly, and I'm sure without wishing it, wounded

one more man and made him feel sorry he was born. Only for the time, of course. Give me a couple of hours, and I hope I shall be myself again. You called your smiles just now 'poor plain little things.' You couldn't have spoken seriously, and so it was not fair of you to say anything about them. I have met you only twice; but those poor plain little things, as you call them, have—done for me. God knows, I'm a fool, and not a young one either; but I'd do anything, almost *be* anything, if I could have those smiles for my own every day of my life. That's how I feel *now*, please to understand. I wish I knew if by-and-by you will be laughing to yourself about me or not. Really, I can't tell. I shall fight against this image of you which you have fastened in my brain so that other memories can't stand against it yet; and I hope I may crush it out. Hope? Why yes, of course, for I couldn't live else. And that's all. You will perceive that I am, unfortunately, in love, Miss Riddell, and therefore I had better say 'Good-by' at once."

He proffered his hand, smiling. It was not such a bitter smile as his words required—not quite. But such as it was it left him altogether when he marked with some degree of calmness the expression on the girl's face.

She was waxen white, breathing fast, and there was real pain in her eyes.

"You—think that of me?" she stammered.

The Major drew himself up. "I have no right to think anything about you except the best possible," he said. "Please forgive me. I'm an inconsiderate brute. I thought I had more sense. I—won't you say 'Good-by,' Miss Riddell, and have done with me?"

"Yes, Major Lee," she said. "I too have been—thoughtless. It is better, I suppose. Good-by." She gave him her hand, flushing as she did so, looking at him earnestly, and then looking away. "Believe me," she added, "I had no idea."

"And neither had I," said he, trying to be gay, "that I was such a boy. Well, I hope you will the more easily forget my stupidity."

He scarcely knew that he had patted the little hand in his as if he were a grandfather rather than a boy. Then he took his hat from the soil of the camellia beneath which he had placed it when his mad fit seized him, and prepared to go.

"I think you said there was another way out?" he asked. "I'm afraid I daren't go back into the drawing-room."

"Yes," she said. Leading the way, she conducted him through the glass-houses and so to the lawn.

Here the Major had something to add to his previous pleas for merciful judgment.

"I was never in love before, Miss Riddell," he said, hat in hand, with several new wrinkles on his forehead. "But I dare say, with your experience, you will have surmised that at once. Please Heaven I am now inoculated. Good-by."

"Good-by," she said again.

The Major's emotions were not agreeable as he passed the different flower-beds of the garden. Thousands of bulbs were here shooting their young hopes heavenwards. He might have tormented himself by contrasting his still-born hope with theirs, so full of the promise of fruition. But he had enough to distress him without that. He had humiliated himself and hurt that beautiful girl. Yes, he realized this now; he had hurt her feelings, perhaps even wronged her.

He paused at the gate, positively half tempted to return, in the ardor of his contrition. But Albert Stiles diverted him from that step. He caught him on the pavement outside and immediately became excited.

"Oh, I say, good business, Major Leel!" he cried. "You're just the man I want. I'm sure you'll do it when you know the circumstances."

"What may you be talking about?" said Grandison Lee.

"I didn't know, Major, you were so thick with Popper's folks. Wish to goodness they'd talk of me as they do of you—that is, the old lady does. Any one can see, too, that you stand pretty well with Miss Riddell. Lucky bargee! Now, couldn't you, do you think, slip in a sly word for a fellow now and then? I've eight hundred a year allowance, and I'm an only son, and certainly not worse than the average man. But Mary Riddell does ride such a high cock-horse of her own that there's no touching her unless you're something lofty yourself. If you *would* talk to her in a fatherly way, you know, about being practical, I'd be no end obliged to you."

The Major's face would have frightened some young men.

"Practical!" he said. "Do you think it would be practical of her to marry you? Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, of course it would," was the eager reply. "We've known each other since we were *so* tall." He put his hand down to his knee.

Then all the severity went out of Grandison Lee's countenance.

"My lad, he said, "I'm sorry for you. If you can't do without my help after an acquaintanceship of that long growth, I'm afraid you're past praying for."

"But Major——"

"We're a *couple* of fools, and that's all about it, Stiles," said the Major, interrupting him. "And I've squandered enough time already to-day."

He strode off with a nod and the bearing of a man without a care in the world.

Looking something like a limp tulip, Albert Stiles stared after him. "Selfish beggar!" he growled sulkily.

It was the evening of the County Ball, and Baddenham was in its most volatile mood—that is to say, a considerable number of the mothers and daughters of Baddenham, and the cook-confectioner who had charge of the supper. Baddenham's favored mankind regarded the dance much more apathetically, and some even with apprehension. Among these last were Colonel Reed of the Red Heavies and Grandison Lee.

The Colonel struck a painful yet significant note at dinner an hour or two before the ball was open. It was both painful and significant, in spite of the forced levity in his jolly red face while he spoke. "I hope none of you fellows will forget yourselves," he said, in a pause which followed Lieutenant Bissell's cold mention of certain of their inevitable partners by-and-by. "No plunging to get straight, you know. I've had enough of rash specs."

Little Popper, who looked ill, hurriedly plunged straight at his champagne-glass. He quite believed all eyes were on him, and that he was being cursed freely under a dozen white shirt-fronts. It made him feel almost sick. As for hating himself, he had done that with so much energy for the last fifty hours—nights included—that he couldn't anyhow raise another opprobrious epithet to pelt himself with.

But in fact, his brother-officers of the Red Heavies did not look at him at all—except Grandison Lee, that impulsive

stick of a fellow, and he only for a moment. With an impatient cough at himself, he looked rapidly before him the next moment.

"No one's blaming *you*, Popper," the Colonel continued.

"Set of sharks!" exclaimed Captain Gadbecker. "When they can't get their rations out of the public they cut and carve at each other. So I've heard. It's devilish bad luck, but of course no one's blaming Popper. He's not a shark."

A gentle laugh rippled here and there about the table.

"No, but I'm an ass!" cried little Popper. "I did think my governor——"

"I wouldn't dwell on it!" interrupted the Colonel kindly. "My fault for saying any thing about it. I only did it because of this kick-up. There'll be a lot of girls there—eligible, I fancy, is the word—eligible girls. Eh, Bissell?"

"I expect you know all about it, sir," said Lieutenant Bissell.

"No, I don't, any more than Grandison Lee."

"I," said the Major hastily, with a quick movement of the eyebrows, "haven't been to a ball for ten years."

At these words a laugh arose which was not gentle; and Wibley, a subaltern only a few months senior to Popper himself, flung a dart. "Then why's he going now?" he cried, waving his cigarette.

Young Wibley was one of the only three who were not sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Captain Galway tapped Grandison Lee lightly on the back. "He has you there, old man!" he observed.

"Well, do you know," said the Major, making as good a show of frivolity as could be expected of him, "I'd give something to get out of it. If I hadn't promised—Oh, well, never mind."

The Red Heavies were themselves again for about a minute: they acknowledged Grandison Lee's avowal with a tempest of laughter. Even little Popper joined in gustily, though he still looked as if he had barely survived a bad passage across the Channel.

The Major himself wore a threadbare smile. Only when the mirth drooped did he attempt to explain. "You're all on a wrong tack!" he said, in the simple candor of his soul. "At least, I imagine you are."

"Who is it, then?" urged Captain Galway.

"It happens to be Mrs. Popper. That is to say——"

There never was such ingenuousness embedded in such imposing bulk. He saw his mistake when the very glass on the table was ringing with the roar which followed. This time he laughed well in train with the rest.

The session ended with the Colonel's command: "Gentlemen, you are requested to see that Major Lee is not led away by his feelings in the course of the evening."

Perhaps it *was* all rather rough on little Popper, as some of them said and thought. But if so, Popper bore no malice.

He got hold of the Major in the yard as the latter was making for his rooms to dress, and begged to accompany him. "I'm a quick-change man myself," he said; "and I do so want, to have a chat with you. You can guess what about."

The Major couldn't exactly do that. He proceeded to hope Popper had not been hurt by his unwitting mention of Mrs. Popper.

"Not a bit. Why should I? It's this infernal Westralian Coal and Iron business. May I be quite open with you, Lee?"

Now, this was a poser for the Major, who believed that he had retrograded in character somewhat deplorably since his *contretemps* with Mary Riddell. He had wondered just now what the fellows would think if they knew that he, too, was mixed up in the rout of the Red Heavies, due to Popper's father's erroneous estimation of the Westralian market. He had yielded to temptation. He had listened to all Popper's glowing words, echoed from Throgmorton Street, and he had resolved that Lawrence should have that month or two of foreign coaching which his *vivâ voce* in French and German almost demanded. But he had managed it all apart from the others. There was a Stock Exchange man in Baddenham, and there was an obliging Hebrew. The necessary cover of one hundred pounds was readily obtained from the latter, and then passed on to the stockbroker. And it had vanished like a feather in a hurricane. The Major decided that he *could* not tell Popper this sordid little tale. The poor fellow had quite enough to reproach himself about. The Red Heavies had plunged, and the Colonel's balance to the bad, all told, of more than a thousand pounds, was but a small fraction of the regiment's entire loss.

"If you think I can do anything, Popper," he said, rather wearily.

"There's nothing for you or any one to do. I'm thinking of shooting myself. That's all. But I thought I'd like to tell some one beforehand. I don't intend to do it till after the ball; but I'm such a wretched coward I feel I must let some fellow into the secret. There'll be an inquest, and——"

"Thank you, I'm sure," said Grandison Lee. "I should enjoy myself very much as chief witness at your inquest, Popper. But I beg your pardon. Pray continue."

The Major's initial horror had been succeeded by an emotion which forced him to be ironical.

"Well," said little Popper desperately, "what is a fellow to do?"

"Do?"

Grandison Lee caught the subaltern by the arm. "Good heavens!" he whispered. "Are you out of your senses? Your sister——"

"My sister's nothing to do with me in a matter this size, Lee. Women don't understand honor like men. The only comfort I've got is knowing *you've* not been hit; she'd never forgive me that. Not that I should care if she didn't, after I'm dead."

"Popper," said the Major, holding him tight, "you called yourself an ass just now. You are one. But you'd be an immeasurable one if you committed suicide for a paltry knock like this. You'd be the wretched coward you called yourself too. Really, I have no patience with you!"

"Then what about the other fellows, sir?"

"Allow me to say, confound the other fellows, on such an occasion!" The Major flushed that tawny red of his which appeared only in his most passionate moments. "That is," he added, with next to no passion, "it can't be helped, and you wouldn't fill their pockets by killing yourself. Upon my word, Popper, you appal me. Where's your *esprit de corps*, for one thing? An officer of the Red Heavies to put a bullet into his head because of a disappointment, like a brainless kitchen-maid! That *would* be mounting a bar sinister on the colors."

"I didn't think of that, Lee," exclaimed Popper.

"No, of course you didn't. That's just how fellows go wrong. They fix their eyes on their own bit of an itch, and ask——" He stopped and shrugged. "I'm a fine fellow to talk," he went on, in a changed and quite humble tone:

"You're the only fellow here whose opinion I care a hang for anyway," said Popper. "I suppose it's steering clear of messes yourself that makes you give such rattling good advice to other chaps."

"Oh!" said Grandison Lee. "Do you think so?"

"I'd bet—that is, I'll warrant—you've never lost *your* head and wanted to shoot *yourself*, Lee."

This was too much. The Major chuckled derisively. They were at the threshold of his quarters.

"Come in for ten minutes and I'll tell you something to open your eyes," he said. "You'll not mind my washing the while?"

In those ten minutes Grandison Lee gave little Popper's statement the lie by losing his head like the poor brainless kitchen-maid he had already referred to. He meant it for an object-lesson, partly; indeed, primarily. He told Popper all about his love at first sight for Mary Riddell, and his incredible behavior a few days later.

"There!" he said as a finish, giving his jacket a shake, "you won't talk such rubbish again, I hope, nor think that because all men don't air their troubles like shirts on a line, they haven't got any. I must, of course, request you to keep this to yourself."

Little Popper's excitement was intense. He seemed to have forgotten his own sanguinary programme altogether. He was all eyes while the Major was speaking; but the *dénouement* disgusted him.

"Well, I'll be dashed!" he cried. "The 'mater' thought something was up with her. She hasn't been the same girl since. But I say, Major, you're not thick enough to say that you can't see through her?"

"See through her?"

"Yes, of course. By Jove! if I was spoony on a girl and she treated me no worse than Polly did you, I'd have a ring on her finger inside the week. She'd marry you like a shot—that is——"

The Major took little Popper by the shoulders and softly pushed him towards the door. "You mustn't talk like that!" he said, speaking with difficulty. "Go away and brush your beautiful hair, and—no more of that other non-sense either."

"All right, old man," said little Popper cheerfully. "I know

the Red Heavies die, but do not marry, and all that; but there ought to be exceptions. Well, I'm off; and a thousand thanks."

The Major shut the door and sat down; nor did he stir from his chair until his man rapped to tell him that Captain Galway and the cab were both ready for him.

Of his thoughts as he sat thus idle, looking at nothing—at least seeing nothing within the actual range of his eyes—it may suffice to say that they were extraordinarily confused, yet all rushing and curvetting and flying about one pretty gray-eyed face with the love-light in it. He had dreaded the ball before, and he dreaded it now still more. But it was no indecision about going or not going that kept him thus motionless. Of course he would go. But supposing Popper was right in what he had said about his sister? It was preposterous; yet many things that were preposterous turned out to be true. Only supposing!

"Tell Captain Galway I will be with him in two minutes," he said.

A quarter of an hour afterwards he was charming Mrs Popper as he led her with unexpected ease through the opening quadrille. It was evident that she did not see he was wearing a mask. That knowledge invigorated him, and he almost hoped the ordeal would not be so very severe after all. They had reached the hall a little late, "thanks to your dawdling," said Captain Galway; but the Major had found Mrs. Popper near the door, waiting, as it were, to pounce upon him.

"I knew you would not fail me, Major," she said, taking his arm and at once filling a gap in a set. "I am like my daughter Mary: I have faith enough to move mountains—in some men."

"She is with you?" he asked stiffly, neglecting the compliment.

"To be sure. In the center of the room, with Lord Middlebury. She didn't want to wear such a gaudy frock, but I told her I insisted on being able to see what she was doing."

"In crimson?"

"Why, yes, certainly; I suppose it's a crimson, like your own dress-jackets. She had it made in honor of Peter's regiment."

Mrs. Popper had something more to say about her daughter Mary ere the quadrille finished.

"I don't care what you'll think of me, Major Lee," she said; "but I took the liberty of filling in six or seven of my daughter's engagements—tentatively—you understand. I can't have her dancing with every one. But most of the Heavies are safe, and—if you would see her after this dance and ascertain which is yours! Am I forgiven?"

"You have honored me, Mrs. Popper," said the Major.

That or not, she had at least relieved him of an initiative the thought of which had encumbered him.

"Take me to her, please," said Mrs. Popper at the interval; and, breathing deeply, the Major complied.

It wasn't easy to steer a lady of Mrs. Popper's magnitude through such a crowd with comfort to all parties concerned. But at a certain stage in the progress she helped him greatly. It was when she spied young Stiles shoving his way also towards Mary Riddell.

"Major," she said severely, "I want Albert Stiles. You look after yourself."

She played her part like a Roman parent, too, reckless of appearances.

Mary was smiling first upon one suitor and then upon another, when Mrs. Popper came upon the scene. The Major once again yielded to the fascination of that matchless smile. She was paler, and he fancied thinner, than before; but her smile was immortal, and never to be forgotten.

Mrs. Popper called to her, and her eyes met Grandison Lee's. Then Mrs. Popper secured young Stiles.

"Give me your arm," she said, taking it. "And now guide me to those nice broad blue seats under the flags, Mr. Stiles."

"Half a crack, Mrs. Popper," exclaimed young Stiles, frowning.

"No, Mr. Stiles, not even a quarter of a crack, unless you wish me to write to your mother and tell her——"

Young Stiles could not escape. And until the next dance Mrs. Popper held him fast. She met one or two acquaintances on the way to the broad blue seats at the side, and paused to comment on the brilliancy of the spectacle, and so forth. But Albert Stiles couldn't slip free of her. He tried, but couldn't do it. She let him go only when the floor was clearing for the waltz. And meanwhile Mary and the Major had come together. She merely said a quiet "Good evening," and gave him her card; and when he looked at it she added,

almost in a whisper, "It was my mother's doing. Of course you shall please yourself."

Even he could not help smiling when he saw that Colonel Reed was down for number six, and himself for number seven.

"It was bar accidents—that is, other engagements!" she whispered on. She laughed too, and again their eyes met. Her pallor was briefly hidden by a blush; but she spoke with that boyish note which had at the first done so much to infatuate him.

Then they separated; though not until she had smiled at him with an intimacy she didn't give to others, and said softly, "I'm so sorry for you."

She referred to the general ordeal of the ball; but for the next hour he puzzled himself off and on about the meaning of her words. He danced two other duty-dances, then left it all alone, waiting for number seven, and following the movements of that crimson gown which held life's best blessing for some one. Not that he felt dull. By no means. Men chaffed him on his laziness, and ladies challenged him about his culpable want of gallantry. Young Popper cuffed his back once with a "Well, old chap, I *am* ashamed of you!" which seemed so incongruous with the Peter Popper of eight o'clock or thereabouts, that Grandison Lee briefly forgot the youngster's sister in meditating about moods and men. Albert Stiles also dropped him a word. "Old Mother Popper's a hag!" he said. "She's spoilt *my* evening, Major, confound her! It's well to be some folks!" This said, he rushed to the supper-room.

Between the fifth dance and the sixth, Captain Galway had a brief gossip with him. "Reminds me of Nero's fiddling when Rome frizzled, Lee!" he remarked.

"What?" said the Major.

"Oh, that wretched Westralian business, you know. It's tied me up for months and months. The Colonel's real nervous lest any of us should be angling for an heiress. He'll be glad to see *you* looking so safe—will the good old boy! But you're not moping, are you?"

"Moping? Bless my soul, no, Galway."

"Nor dancing?"

"Well, I have got *one* coming on. I'm waiting for it."

The Captain laughed sagaciously. "I see! Trot her round, then off to supper, and away you go. Who is she, Lee?"

"Oh, well—Miss Riddell."

"Miss Riddell! My word, that's good for you. Her dearly beloved mother informed me *I* needn't apply, as she was full up. I'm not the only one complaining either. Another beastly corner in the market, I suppose. And just when—between ourselves—I am seriously thinking of chucking the service and—you won't tell—wooing her to the uttermost. I've talked it over with Popper. Well, here we go again, more's the pity!"

The music declared a fresh dance, and Captain Galway also went his way.

At last Grandison Lee's turn came. He rose heavily, and made his way straight towards the crimson gown. Exertion had increased Mary Riddell's beauty, yet it was with a certain shyness, as well as her old sweetness of expression, that she put her hand on his arm.

"I'm tired," she said.

"Would you rather sit?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, if it is the same to you."

"Of course."

It was wonderful and incomprehensible. As he conducted the girl across the room to a bowered alcove, towards which she herself had glanced as if with longing, he felt blindly blissful again. Just as if he had not already gone through the mill and come out seasoned, woman-proof!

There were four others in that little bower, but they soon frolicked away.

Then, on the instant, Mary Riddell began to speak earnestly, much as she had spoken when first they met in the beech grove. "Peter has told me of the dreadful wickedness he was contemplating this evening, and of what you have been to him again; and I—I don't know what to say to thank you." She rushed the words with, it seemed, a sudden gleam of tears in her eyes.

"Oh, my God!" gasped Grandison Lee. "Peter ought to have known better than to say anything to any one about it. But—I can't think he would have done it, Miss Riddell. He couldn't."

"I believe he would."

"Well, it was a shame of him to—spoil your pleasure. But it's all right now. Don't worry about him. He'll do well enough. He's had a lesson."

Mary Riddell's smile through her tears, now indubitable,

was terribly sweet for the Major to see. "One doesn't always remember one's lessons though," she said. "Peter is like me in having a bad memory. It's a good thing sometimes."

"A great blessing, as you say, sometimes," said Grandison Lee slowly. "Do you know, I've thought now and again the words 'Make us forget things' wouldn't be a bad addition to the Lord's Prayer. And yet I don't know!"

"I think," said she, "that one forgets only where it is best that one should forget."

"Ah!"

Then Grandison Lee understood that he was on the threshold of another crisis. The girl's words, the light in her eyes, her extraordinary indifference to that brutal indiscretion of his, and the fierce thumping of his own heart—what was to come of it all?

But quick as a lightning flash, something intervened. A sound as of a hundred thunder-claps in one was followed—no, accompanied—by a crashing on all sides. The glass of a small window above fell about them in a splintery shower, and even while it fell, the wall itself cracked like the report of a hundred rifles, bowed, and——

Grandison Lee was on his feet, with the battle-look in his eyes. "This way!" he said. The girl's hands were in his.

But the ball-room was a pandemonium of shrieks, as one thud succeeded another.

"No. Here!"

There was no time for more. Right and left, before and behind, all was collapsing. But in the few seconds of time at his disposal, Grandison Lee gave Mary Riddell all the protection his body could give her, as bricks in clots and dozens, and by ones and twos, rained upon them. And when he dropped, all but insensible, he still contrived that his body should act as a shield to the girl, who had sunk in the piling litter at their feet.

The Mayor of Baddenham had quite recently drawn the Council's attention to the danger of the local dynamite factory having even limited storage-quarters in such proximity to a public building. This terrible explosion had proved the Mayor's wisdom, if nothing else.

About two months after the tragedy of the Baddenham ball, sub-Lieutenant Popper got out of the train at Badden-

ham for his weekly visit to his relations and Grandison Lee. He wore quite an alert air, and no moustache. He had a diagonal scar from his right cheek to the middle of his upper lip instead of a moustache, just like a saber-cut. Three or four more of the Heavies had scars about them of a similar kind. When they were moved from Baddenham to Aldershot they looked like men just home from active service. Grandison Lee was still in the Baddenham hospital.

Altogether, five people had died of that dynamite explosion. It was reckoned a merciful deliverance on the whole. The roof had been of light materials, though even common Llanberis slates fall hard from a height of thirty feet.

Of the wounded, Grandison Lee's case was the gravest at first. They took him to the hospital with others, and expected him to die. He raved night and day for weeks, but he did not die.

"Poor old chap," said Colonel Reed, after one of his regulation visits to the Major's bedside, "who'd have thought he had such a secret as that? From his delirium, he must have been as gone in love—and so on—as the callowest youngster that was ever nailed fast by a pretty simperer."

The Red Heavies knew all about it by this time. They had no scruple in such a matter. Several well-controlled scowls were directed at little Popper.

"Well, I can't help it," said this unfortunate agent of mischief. "And I'll bet any chap a level fiver he pulls through yet."

Captain Galway spoke as the mouthpiece of the company. "You're not tempting as a financier, Popper," he said.

But the Colonel took a broader view of the circumstance. "It only proves," he said, without even a twinkle in his steely eyes, "that no man is safe where a woman is concerned."

"Not even a Red Heavy," observed Captain Galway, with the expression of a Scotch elder who has never backslid. And yet he had been refused by Mary Riddell during the past week. In five minutes he had proposed, been rejected, and said "Good afternoon."

"And look here," little Popper cried, with defiance and self-assertion of a new kind, which seemed to have come to him with the sticking-plaster in place of his moustache. "I don't care what you all say, the Major *will* pull through. That specialist Johnny doesn't despair. I got hold of him

in private yesterday, and, between ourselves, I bribed him with an extra guinea to tell me the honest truth. Oh yes, you may sneer, but I did! He said, 'The poor fellow may live, or he may not.' That, from him, is reckoned first rate. They say he's the most artful pessimist in London."

"Anything else?" suggested Lieutenant Bissell. "And did he take that extra guinea?"

"No. The old fool said, 'Put it in your pocket again, my good lad.' He didn't know me. But he said my feelings did me credit."

This time the Red Heavies really laughed. It was a corporate laugh that ought to have been photographed—sticking-plaster and unexpected shots of pain gave it such a peculiar character.

However, by-and-by they were ordered to Aldershot; and with regret, Grandison Lee was left behind, still raving.

But before they went away little Popper had a most academically earnest interview with his half-sister Mary. Mrs. Popper and her daughter were staying on at Baddenham indefinitely.

"You ought to know about it, Polly," said Popper; "especially as he got you out of it without even a scratch—only a messed frock, and that'll wash right. He does nothing but shout things about *you*. He'd rather die, he says, than really give you pain, and so on; but he can't, can't, *can't* live like other fellows if you will get in his way. You've knocked all the old stuffing out of him, Polly."

Mary had had her bad moments since the ball, and she was anything rather than free of them yet. They had left their mark on her, though not on her beauty, which was generally accounted much improved even by that young horizontal wrinkle above her gray eyes. She said nothing when Popper paused for her reply. She looked steadily out of the window.

"Well, what are you going to do?" he asked. He wished he dared stiffen his statement by telling her of the Major's confession on the night of the ball.

"Do?" she said drearily. "What is there for any one to do until—he is better?"

"Couldn't you go and see him? You might just hold his hand or something. I've read of remarkable cures from little things of that kind."

"In novels, Peter."

"Well, and aren't they taken from life?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Then you propose to do *nothing?*" he inquired, with an indignation he had no difficulty in assuming.

"I wish, Peter," she said, "that you would not take it for granted that you have inherited *all* the family stock of good impulses. I *have* seen Major Lee. Mother and I went together. And *you* did not happen to be in that—that horrible little room when the walls—oh, do leave the subject alone—until he is better." She ended with a sob, and stood close to the window. She kept even her profile turned from him.

This somewhat mollified her brother. "All right," he said, "I only meant that I hoped you had the usual amount of proper feeling, and so on. You needn't have been sarcastic. He'll be no good if he recovers: smashed head, shoulders, ribs, and—"

But she did not wait for the completion of the catalogue. She glided from the room, and Peter's "Well, good-by, old girl; we're off by the two-ten train!" met with no response from her.

Still, he went off to Aldershot decently satisfied on the whole. His mother had snubbed him furiously when he used even still plainer language to her. But he didn't care for that either. He made his way through the Baddenham streets with uncommon lightness of foot. He had asked the station master, and been informed that the latest news from the hospital was most cheerful. Major Lee was conscious at last, and healing well everywhere.

"What a constitution, sir!" the station master had exclaimed, almost reverently, as his eyes ranged over the subaltern, from his necktie to his boots.

"Yes," Peter had said; "we're not all like him. I'm devilish glad to hear it."

He had two minutes' amusement before leaving. Whom should he see approaching him, in a blaze of sunshine through the open skylight of the station roof, and in the very latest shock of a necktie (scarlet, with black moons), but Mr. Albert Stiles!

"Well," he said, after an interchange of formal nods, "what's *your* game?"

"What's yours, if it comes to that?" said the other.

"Oh, mine's all right. I'm not in love—with myself, or any one else, I'm jolly glad to say."

"That's news, anyway. You don't look *sorry* for yourself, whether or not."

Little Popper turned gleefully upon a porter who now approached them with a superb bouquet of orchids, lilies, and white roses. "Still at it," he chuckled. "I don't know how those Covent Garden chaps would make a living without you."

Young Stiles savagely bade the porter bear the nosegay to a hansom. "It's my last try, if you care to know," he said. "I've had about enough of it."

"Not you," laughed little Popper. "I'd lay any one anything you'll be perfuming my sister's atmosphere just the same this time next year. I call it beastly hard lines she won't let you get any nearer her than that."

"You'd lose that bet, sharp as we all know you are!" said Albert Stiles.

Then he hastily followed his flowers. He would have been much moved had he known their eventual destination.

This encounter sent little Popper straight to the hospital: the Regent House folks might await their turn. Here the station master's report was confirmed. It began at the lodge. The hall-porter touched his hat and echoed the good news. The secretary came humming down the corridor and was hilarity itself in the matter. He said *The Lancet* had an article on the case, and the staff surgeons and physicians were all stroking themselves openly, while in secret (he whispered it) rendering thanks and praise to Major Lee's remarkable constitution.

"I rather fancy, though," the secretary added, "that some one is with him now. I heard his name mentioned a moment ago."

"Ill soon out him, whoever he is!" said little Popper.

But a nurse now drifted towards him on the staircase and smiled. "I don't think, sir, you can see the Major yet," she said.

"Not *another* operation?" he asked. "Can't they let well alone?"

"Oh no, sir, not an operation. Not exactly, at least." She was as arch with him as even an exhilarated nurse well could be.

"Er—how do you mean?" he said, frowning impatiently. "Who is it?"

"Oh, well, I think you might go up and knock at the door, at any rate," she replied, much in the tone the young woman found efficacious in the children's ward. "He really is surprisingly improved."

Little Popper accordingly proceeded on his way.

But with the Major's door in sight, who should come through it, blooming like a June rose, with the traces of smiles and unspeakable happiness on her face, her eyes sparkling as if heaven had just washed them in magic dew as well as the most beautifying kind of tears—not too large a proportion of tears—who, but his sister, Mary Riddell! Alone, too!

"Hullo!" he cried, for she didn't seem to see him.

She started, and with no diminution of her beauty, clasped his outstretched hand.

"Oh Peter!" she whispered. "Yes, he will see you. He hoped you would come, when I told him it was your day. He's so— Oh, but you will hear it from his own lips. He— But I can't talk now. We shall see you by-and-by."

Peter broke into a picturesque grin. "I say, Polly," he began. But she did not wait for the rest; and it occurred to him in a flash that it was perhaps better so. Albert Stiles and his bouquet would get their knock-out with the more natural directness.

Then little Popper tapped at the Major's door, waved aside the nurse who had turned up in behalf of her duty, and entered the room.

Grandison Lee was lying in a ridiculously small bed, still in a mummy's multitude of wrappings, and with a smile on his lips which might have been a masculine twin of the smile little Popper had just seen in his sister. He was distinctly a pale major now; but otherwise he looked much like himself, temporarily transfigured.

"Well, old chap," cried little Popper, "this is just simply splendid!"

They looked at each other, and even this frivolous subaltern felt almost awed by the Major's face. But he soon understood thoroughly. Grandison Lee spoke to him coherently for the first time since the accident.

"Popper, I'm the happiest man on earth!" he said.

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ANECDOTES

stand up in your seats just for a moment so that I can see you!"

The members of the congregation arose as one man.

Then the good man shouted again: "Please be seated. Now all you who want to go to hell—stand up!"

In the midst of the services, a genial gentleman somewhat under the influence of stimulants had wandered into the building, and as soon as he had found his way to a seat, fell into a peaceful slumber. The bustle and confusion incident to the response to the first call, awakened the sleeping citizen, who, realizing where he was and thinking that the meeting was about to adjourn, struggled slowly to an upright position, just as the doctor made his second call. His muddled brain slowly grasped the import of the last call, but he did not exactly realize the gravity of his position; but, looking around the building and seeing no one but the good doctor and himself standing, addressed the latter as follows:

"Doctor, we seem to be in a hopeless minority!"—FRANK R. JONES, Birmingham, Ala.

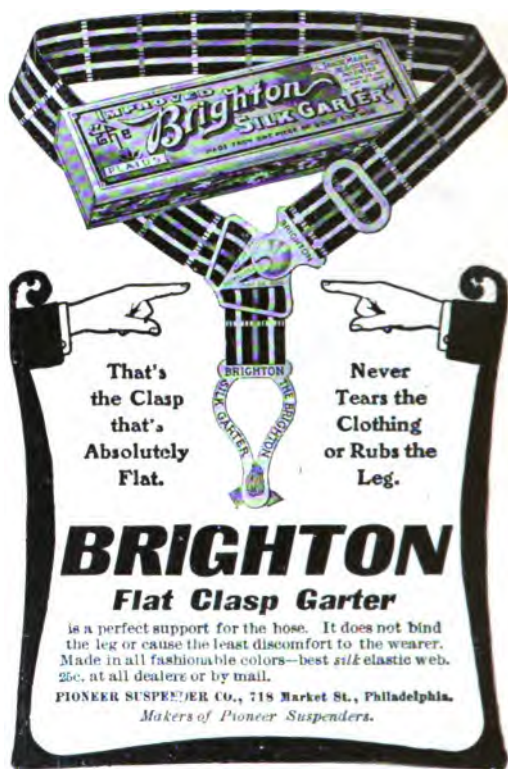
It Did Not Take.

The venerable rector of St. J.—'s Church recently "visited" the Sunday School, and peering over his glasses at the children asked this question: "If there are any children in the Sunday School who have not been baptized, let them hold up their hands." A small boy over in the "amen" corner held up a grimy little paw, whereupon the minister said: "Why, Johnnie, you have been baptized, for I baptized you myself." "Yes," replied Johnnie, "but it did not take."

—GEORGIE E. ALBERS, Knoxville, Tenn.

He Couldn't Pay Too Much.

After an extensive tour through Europe and a visit with the "auld acquaintance" in Scotland, a jovial citizen of Detroit (Mich.) decided to spend a few days in Ireland. On the



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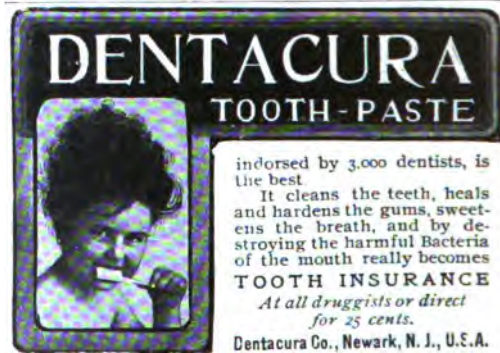
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ANECDOTES

Dublin wharf, where waiting coachmen watched the procession crowding from the gangways, a jolly cabman stepped aside, espying the gentleman with his bride, who beckoned from the upper deck. When the other drivers were all engaged and starting away he still stood on the pier, apparently studying the steamer's rigging, while a familiar deckhand accosted him, asking:

"What's the matter, Pat? You're slow in getting started today."

"See that foine old man up there?"

Pat pointed at the couple, just leaving their seats, and added:

"That's my fare; I'll dhrove thim all day I'm thinkin', or take thim to their distination for dinner!"

The gentleman was limping with a cane, his feet being swollen with gout; as they slowly approached Pat offered his cab, saying:

"You're the man I'm waiting for; I knew you would like to ride."

As the agreeable pair had not planned to go anywhere in particular, they made themselves comfortable in the cab and instructed the driver to show them the streets of Dublin. They enjoyed several hours in this way, resting at interesting points, and concluded to stop at an attractive hotel. Standing at the curb with a handful of coin, the gentleman asked:

"Well, Pat, how much is the bill?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Irishman, "I didn't think of *charging* you anything! I always consider it a great honor to dhrove such a distinguished gentleman—"

"Tut, tut, Pat; of course we don't expect you to take us all over Dublin for nothing. We want to pay for your time and—"

"Well, if you put it *that* way," interrupted Pat; "you can't pay me any too much. Biddy will be glad to get any little bill you can spare—Biddy and the childhre can use it at home!"

Pat received more than he could possibly have asked for his services, the

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ANECDOTES

traveler being forced to pay according to his own liberality, while smiling at the cabman's cunning scheme.—J. C. Powell, Fort Erie, Ont.

The Wrong Man.

Passing through the White Mountains this Summer, a curious mistake happened on the "White Mountain Special" on which I was a passenger. The car was crowded. People were talking, laughing and enjoying themselves to their heart's content. The seat in front of me was occupied by a stern individual who looked to be a minister or an actor.

The train stopped at a small lunch station, I think called "Never Left." I noticed my sober friend leave the car without his dress-suit case. The car started up. I said to a friend I was with, "that man has left his dress-suit case, and there he goes through the station door now." With that I opened the window, threw out the case, and called to the trainman to give it to the man who went into the lunch room. The train started on, I thought nothing more of this incident until very shortly in came my sober friend from the smoking car. Imagine my surprise! I saw him look for his dress-suit case and ask the trainmen if they knew anything about it. I said to him, "I have made the mistake, I threw your case out at the last station to a man who is your double." "Why," he said, "what shall I do, my full dress suit is in that case and I am booked to sing at a concert to-night." I said, "Here is my card, and if you don't get that case again I will be responsible and make good its contents." We asked the trainmen what we should do. They said to telegraph back and have it traced.

Station after station was passed until finally word came that the lost had been found, and that the singer would get his dress-suit case before the concert that night. We all had cause to thank the "wrong man."—Charles L. Riley, Bensonhurst, L. I.

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